

The Nation and The Athenæum

THE NATION. VOL. XXXVIII., No. 25.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1926.

[THE ATHENÆUM. NO. 5003.

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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Assembly, which had been called together to elect Germany to membership of the League, came to an end last Wednesday without achieving its purpose. Up to the last moment the issue remained in doubt, but when the Brazilian representative had announced his Government's "irrevocable and final" decision to veto Germany's admission to the Council unless Brazil was also accorded a permanent seat, nothing remained for the Assembly to do but to postpone the whole question till September. The concluding speeches made the best of a depressing situation, and gave the smaller nations, which had played no part in the complicated negotiations, an opportunity of showing where their sympathies lay.

"We seven Powers," declared Sir Austen Chamberlain, "who signed the Treaty of Locarno and its accompanying Pacts are determined that the good work there done shall not be interrupted, but that those Pacts shall go forward to their fulfilment and ratification, and that the policy of peace, reconciliation, and co-operation which was there begun shall not be interrupted."

M. Briand was notably cordial in his references to Germany, and declared that she had at least obtained moral admission to the League; and, indeed, it may be hoped that the whole affair, unfortunate as it is in many aspects, may have the paradoxical result of doing more to improve Franco-German relations than would have been accomplished had Germany been admitted without any hitch. Throughout the involved—and in many respects discreditable—negotiations, the old conception of victor and vanquished nations never raised its head. Germany was, in fact, treated on an equal footing, and in a very different spirit from that prevailing even at the outset of the Locarno negotiations. Moreover, German opinion has had abundant evidence that there is such a thing as a "League spirit" at Geneva, even though it is not the only spirit represented there.

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The League emerges with considerable loss of credit; and the moral authority of the present Council is undoubtedly undermined. Yet, even here, there are compensations. The extraordinary popularity which

Sweden has acquired by her public-spirited and disinterested stand; the contempt to which Brazil has exposed herself, and for which she will find that no seat upon the Council will be an adequate compensation, will perhaps cause the most hard-shelled diplomats during the next few months to revise their notions of what constitutes, under League conditions, diplomatic triumph and national prestige.

* * *

The negotiations for a formal treaty between Italy and Jugoslavia to prevent the union of Austria and Germany have ceased to be a matter of diplomatic gossip; they are an admitted fact. It would be difficult to exaggerate their menace. It is clear that Italy is actuated as much by jealousy of France as by fear of a German-Austrian union. The projected pact is intended to undermine French influence in the Balkans, and weaken the Little Entente, by placing obligations upon some of its Balkan members; if France is brought in, it is to be as a junior partner. In view of past history and present conditions, no condemnation can be too strong for a policy which gives the Balkan States an opportunity of putting themselves up for diplomatic auction at the Quai d'Orsay and the Italian Foreign Office. The proposed treaty is equally objectionable in its effect on the domestic politics of the Balkans. Belgrade is to receive Italian support for its Salonika claims, which the Greek Government has resolutely opposed, and which can be pressed, in their extreme form, only by intrigue, menaces, and scabbard-rattling. In return, Jugoslavia is to abandon all thoughts of legitimate commercial expansion in the Adriatic. Apart from the wider implications of the treaty, a more unsteady influence in Balkan politics can hardly be imagined.

* * *

Possibilities of a most unfortunate controversy are opened by a resolution introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Borah, and referred to the Foreign Relations Committee of which he is Chairman. By this resolution the Secretary of State is asked what steps he is taking with regard to the claims of American

citizens against Great Britain and France, arising out of violations of "the rights of neutrals" between August 1st, 1914, and America's entry into the war. It is understood that between 2,000 and 3,000 claims have been filed, and that many of them are as wildly inflated by allegations of "indirect loss" as those originally put forward in connection with the "Alabama" and other Confederate cruisers. It does not, of course, follow that the American Government will back the claims. Should they do so, the controversy is likely to be embittered. Apart from very real differences of opinion between European and American jurists on the law of blockade and contraband, the diplomatic and financial relations between the United States and the Allies, American participation in the war, and the recent debt settlements, will combine to give rise to a strong resentment, logical or illogical, in the Allied countries, if vast claims are now sprung upon them. On the other hand, the claimants will enlist the sympathies not only of American believers in the "freedom of the seas" but of the strong and truculent anti-British section of American opinion. Whatever may be the legal aspects of the question, it is devoutly to be hoped that the American Government will decide to let sleeping dogs lie.

* * *

Amid the excitement of more dramatic events, Mr. Churchill's Economy Bill and the discussions of it in the House of Commons have aroused comparatively little interest. The Bill is not a very formidable affair, but each of the three principal items which it comprises are, in our judgment, vicious. It proposes to reduce the State contribution to Health Insurance and to Unemployment Insurance; and it contains a dubious clause in regard to education. Mr. Churchill defended the reductions in the State contributions to the Insurance Funds on the grounds that in neither case will they entail any diminution of the benefits now payable. This is true. But in the case of health insurance the result will be to prevent an increase of benefits that would otherwise have come about; and the change carries an unsatisfactory suggestion of breach of contract with the approved societies and with insured persons. The objection to the reduction of the contribution for unemployment insurance is of a different kind. This is mainly an affair of book-keeping; but it is bad book-keeping. Mr. Churchill argues that, as unemployment has diminished lately, the Fund can get on with a smaller revenue. He tells us that he is excluding in his calculations the possibility of a coal stoppage, because that would upset all calculations. This perhaps is reasonable. But he appears also to be excluding the likelihood of a great increase of unemployment among the miners, following on the closing down of pits, when the coal subsidy has been withdrawn. In view of the terms of the Coal Report, he has no right to leave this prospect out of account.

* * *

In this matter, indeed, Mr. Churchill is trying to have the best of both worlds. The reduction in unemployment costs is largely the product of the coal subsidy. Mr. Churchill assumes that the subsidy will cease as the Commission recommends, and also assumes that unemployment will not thereby be affected, although the Commission expressly warns him that it will. Thus he is really proposing to balance his Budget by increasing the debt of the Insurance Fund; and this we call bad book-keeping. The clause regarding education empowers the Board of Education to withhold the grant-in-aid for any expenditure which it chooses to regard as excessive, thus cutting at the roots of the

educational grant system. Mr. Churchill did not refer to this proposal in his speech on Tuesday, branching instead into a general survey of the financial problem. But it is very important that the precise significance of this clause should be cleared up. On the face of it, it looks like an attempt to do piecemeal what the Government proposed to do comprehensively in the notorious Circular 1371, which had to be withdrawn before a public outcry.

* * *

The chief feature of the debates on the Navy and Army estimates was the manifestation of widespread uneasiness, among service as well as civilian members, at the burden imposed by our expenditure on defence, and the paucity of practical suggestions for its reduction. Mr. Lansbury's motion for the abolition of the Navy was at least logical; but at the best it was a gesture, and not very effective at that. The most vulnerable spot in Admiralty policy—the provocative and wasteful commitment at Singapore—was left unassailed. The widespread demand for a Ministry of Defence, or at any rate for greater co-ordination of the services and of service expenditure, raises technical as well as financial issues of great importance; but probably only those who regard it as a step towards scrapping the Army and Navy in favour of the Air Force, believe that economies can be effected on these lines that would substantially diminish the armament burden. It seems necessary to reiterate, and we believe it should be reiterated on every possible occasion, that the only way of escape lies in international agreement; in a foreign policy that reduces the risks of war; in strengthening the League by every means in our power, and in throwing the whole influence of Great Britain on the side of an early and genuine conference for drastic limitation of armaments.

* * *

Last Sunday's meeting of the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union virtually banished all fears of a national lock-out. The Committee consists exclusively of rank-and-file representatives, and a resolution calling on Hoe's men to return to work was carried by a large majority. The strikers, however, have proved obdurate, and it is doubtful even now whether the A.E.U. and the other six unions concerned will not have to take the extreme step of expulsion. Last Tuesday all the engineering trade unions were again in consultation, but the Hoe dispute was only a minor item on the agenda. The conference was really called to consider the situation created by the failure of the national wage negotiations and the employers' declaration that any attempt to enforce a local or sectional increase would be countered by a national lock-out. Notwithstanding this threat, the unions decided to approve and support attempts to obtain local advances; the unions do not, of course, want sectional advances, owing to the anomalies which would result amongst neighbouring works. There is little doubt that a serious storm is brewing. The employers have put forward a good deal of evidence to show that the industry as a whole cannot bear higher wages, but no reply is apparently to be given to the question whether a particular district can afford an advance; on that there is simply to be an appeal to force. This is an attitude which cannot be tolerated, for the community rightly condemns an appeal to force unless and until every possible investigation and argument has been exhausted. If the Prime Minister is not on the alert, Sir Allan Smith may neutralize all his efforts to pacify Mr. Evan Williams and Mr. Cook.

As Mr. Robert Dell anticipated last week, the result of the by-election in the second division of Paris on Sunday was not decisive, and showed a great advance of the Communists at the expense of the Socialists. It also showed political indifference, due no doubt, at least in part, to disgust with the Parliamentary institutions, for the poll was only 60 per cent. of the electorate. At the general election in May, 1924, when 172,000 electors voted, the Bloc National had 42 per cent. of the total votes cast, the Cartel des Gauches 30 per cent., and the Communists 27 per cent. On Sunday, when there were only 118,000 voters, the Right had again 42 per cent. of the total poll, the Communists 34 per cent., the Socialists 13 per cent., and the Radicals 10 per cent. The second ballot on March 28th will probably be a straight fight between the Bloc National and the Communists, and the latter have the better chance of winning it. Paris has always tended towards extremes in politics, and the Socialists replaced the Radicals some years ago as the strongest party of the Left. Now the Socialists in their turn have lost the first place to the Communists. The constituency, which is composed of seven of the twenty arrondissements, is very representative of Paris as a whole, including as it does all the centre of Paris—the Bourse and the most important commercial quarters—as well as three arrondissements in which the working-class predominates. The result of Sunday's election does not support the idea that Fascism is spreading in Paris. If there is any danger of an upheaval, it would seem to be at the Left.

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The Matteotti case is, we suppose, *sub judice*, though it is difficult to apply that term to the proceedings at Chieti. Inasmuch as the trial has been carefully postponed until the amnesty could be pleaded as a bar to any proceedings against the men who arranged the abduction of Signor Matteotti, the trial of the instruments who were actually and immediately responsible for his death lacks any real significance, and Signora Matteotti's withdrawal from the case as *parte civile* will be generally applauded. It is not Dumini and his associates but the whole system of Fascism that is on trial at the bar of public opinion of all civilized countries—and the verdict has already been given.

* * *

General Pangalos, on his own showing, is the first of the dictators to construct a bridge for the return from dictatorship to constitutionalism. His expedient is to reform the Greek constitution on the American model; to give the head of the State the executive powers of an American President, and to make the Senate and the Chamber purely legislative bodies. General Pangalos will then get himself elected as President by universal suffrage, and take up the reins of government with powers about equivalent to those he now possesses. This is the programme: we may be permitted to doubt how far General Pangalos is willing to submit to a free election, or to give any elected body the powers of the American Senate. The experiment, nevertheless, is interesting. Parliamentary institutions have not worked well in Latin countries, partly owing to the electoral laws and partly owing to reasons deeply imbedded in the Latin character. Thoughtful men in France, Spain, and Italy—men without the least leaning to Fascism—have contended that Parliamentary politics on the British model must always be hybrid growths in countries whose contributions to European civilization have been made under the Cæsarian systems of the Antonines, the Hapsburgs, and the Bourbons; but they have found no effective alternative. It would be strange if it were left to a factious Greek General to solve this philosophical problem. Let us "wait and see."

The dangers of drift in China have again been emphasized. A Japanese destroyer was fired upon by Kuominchun troops at Taku and two officers wounded. Soon after, notes which apparently treat the two warring factions as equal parties were presented to the Fengtien naval forces and the Kuominchun armies. Each side is ordered to remove all existing obstacles to free commercial intercourse between Peking and the sea, and to create no new ones. The latest reports state that these notes were presented by Italian and French officers ashore, and by the captain of H.M.S. "Carlisle" at the Taku bar. It is greatly to be hoped that the Japanese local commanders have been associated with the presentation of the notes. The Japanese Government has shown great restraint over the destroyer incident; but Japanese public opinion feels keenly that Japanese officers were shot at and wounded in the presence of foreign warships, and will be correspondingly comforted if it is known that the Powers are acting in full concert with Japan in demanding that lawless interference with maritime traffic shall cease. The question is one of real importance, for in Japan it is precisely the most respectable and moderate sections of society that are most sensitive to anything in the form of a slight to the nation or its representatives.

* * *

Abd-el-Krim has given a new turn to the tragic-comedy of Morocco by addressing, in person, a letter to the TIMES on the breakdown of the peace negotiations. Unfortunately, his letter is couched in too general terms to throw much light on the situation. It amounts to little more than an assertion that the Rif are fighting for their legitimate rights, and that all peace negotiations have proved abortive through the chicanery of the French and Spanish Governments. Abd-el-Krim himself appears as the simple child of nature who "knows nothing of politics or intrigues," and holds in horror "the shedding of blood, and all those terrible events . . . which have turned the face of humanity black and made the sons of men suffer every kind of torment." We are still left without a clear and authoritative statement of the terms proposed by either party to the struggle. The real significance of Abd-el-Krim's letter lies in its implied recognition that other countries than the belligerents, more particularly Great Britain, have a direct interest in the termination of the Moroccan imbroglio—a fact which the British Government and the League of Nations, as well as France and Spain, seem persistently to ignore.

* * *

The Druse peace proposals, which M. de Jouvenel has rejected, require a brief retrospective explanation. When M. de Jouvenel arrived in Syria, the Druse submitted proposals that were by no means exorbitant. It was not then suggested that France should resign her mandate; but only that Syria should be constituted as a State, and that the relations between Syria and the mandatory Power should be settled by treaty, as in the case of Iraq. M. de Jouvenel made a conciliatory reply, but negotiations broke down. For the new proposals, which demand the complete independence of Syria and her entry into the League of Nations, the Syrian Nationalist Party, to whom the Druse leaders are deeply committed, are doubtless responsible. There seems little prospect of an immediate settlement; the Syrians love an intrigue; the Druse love a fight; the French hate a compromise. In the long run the Druse will doubtless tire of fighting on behalf of the Syrians, and reopen negotiations. For the moment they seem to prefer ravaging the Christian villages in the Lebanon. The summer's campaign will probably be waged with great bitterness and ferocity, thanks to General Sarrail's contemptible plan of arming the villagers, and thus letting loose partisan warfare.

THE GENEVA FIASCO

PROFESSOR WEBSTER gives a vivid picture, in his message from Geneva, of the extraordinary drama which has been staged at the Headquarters of the League during the last fortnight, but the curtain had not yet fallen when his article had to be dispatched. All the world now knows the dénouement, as to which the audience were kept in suspense until the very last moment. The play throughout was an extraordinary mixture—a crook-melodrama, with elements in it of tragedy, comedy, and pure farce—and though it ended on a tragic note, with the postponement of a step to which many hopes are attached, there was not lacking a comic element in the pettiness of the obstacle which dared to interpose itself between those hopes and their realization.

The entry of Germany into the League of Nations has been postponed until September, because Brazil, a country which has no conceivable claim to be regarded as a first-class Power, was determined to veto Germany's admission to a permanent seat on the Council unless she was herself accorded that status. The appropriate rebuke to these pretensions would be for Brazil to lose her temporary place upon the Council at the next meeting of the Assembly, and we are not without hope that the sympathies of other South American States have been sufficiently alienated for this to occur. But though the blame for the final deadlock falls deservedly upon Brazil, it is obvious that she would never have dared to exercise her veto without the encouragement derived from seeing other more important Members of the League engaged in discreditable intrigues and shabby expedients. France is clearly at the bottom of the whole manœuvre; Spain has resorted to methods of prosecuting her own claims which should militate strongly against her future chance of a permanent seat, and Britain, as represented by Sir Austen Chamberlain, has figured miserably as their dupe and cat's-paw.

In some quarters this fiasco at Geneva is being interpreted as a sign that the League itself is discredited and in danger of "breaking up." That is a preposterous misreading of the situation which could only occur to those who dislike the League and wish to see it destroyed, or to those who are so blinded by their enthusiasm for the League that any unpleasantness at Geneva throws them into despair. This is not the first time that these extremes have met in a distorted view of League affairs. Is an institution breaking up when a seat upon its executive is so coveted that every State with a remote chance of success clamours and threatens and cajoles for it? Is it discredited when the whole armoury of diplomacy fails to make a breach in its constitution and integrity? It would be nearer the truth to describe the affair as a clash between the old diplomacy and the League, in which the former has been heavily defeated, and the State which stood steadily and firmly for the League method and the League spirit—Sweden—has gained enormously in prestige and international esteem.

A tribute to Sweden and to its representative M. Unden is due especially from the people of Britain, for it is through them that British public opinion has been able to make itself felt at Geneva during this critical session. While Sir Austen Chamberlain has been engaged in a series of frantic attempts to reconcile the obligations which he has openly incurred with those to which he feels bound by his secret indiscretions, M. Unden has been playing the part which Britain desired her representative to fill, upholding the constitution of the League and preserving its executive organ from being packed and manipulated to serve the aspirations

of this or that group of Powers. To this rôle the Swedish representative remained steadfast throughout, and it is to him more than to any other man that we owe our escape from a much greater catastrophe than that which has occurred. It has been suggested that the offer of Sweden to resign her seat upon the Council to facilitate agreement showed a weakening of principle. We hold, on the contrary, that it was a wise gesture showing how, without tampering with the constitution of the League, difficulties might be overcome and jealousies allayed by a generous spirit the exact opposite of that which has been so prominent in Geneva during this session.

On the whole, however, there is reason to be thankful that the Council and the Assembly have adjourned without adopting any of the expedients and compromises which have been so freely adumbrated during the past few weeks. The last proposal, which was much the least objectionable and which was apparently accepted by all parties except Brazil, was that Sweden and Czechoslovakia should resign their temporary seats in favour of Holland and Poland. But in the present atmosphere of passion and bargaining, Sweden can ill be spared from her present position of authority, and it may be far better to wait until September, when the underlying issues may be more clearly seen, before irrevocable action is taken. It is extremely unfortunate that Germany's entry should be postponed, but it would have been still more deplorable if she had joined the League in a storm of suspicions and recriminations. Perhaps by September this storm will have abated, and perhaps by then the British Parliament and people will have reached an understanding with their Foreign Secretary.

BACK TO THE COAL CRISIS

THE Coal Commission has reported, and we are brought face to face once more with the formidable crisis that confronted us last summer. In all essentials, the situation is unchanged. Economically, indeed, it has become rather more difficult, as the subsidy has had the natural effect of depressing coal prices in the interval. On the other hand, we may hope that the psychological atmosphere is somewhat better. The silence which all parties have maintained so far with regard to the Report is certainly impressive. Even Mr. Cook has kept this silence; great is the credit due to those of his colleagues who have prevailed on him to keep it. There has been an equally laudable suspension of the usual communications from Mr. Philip Gee. The mood on all sides is, for the moment, sober and restrained. But it would be rash to build high hopes on this. The minds of the miners are very far from being adjusted to the necessity of accepting a substantial lowering of wages. They have cherished the hope during the past seven months that the Commission would somehow find a magical solution, which would restore the coal-mines to prosperity, while leaving their wages and hours untouched. Nor have they been alone in this illusion. It has been almost common form recently for speakers and writers of the most diverse schools of thought to express their sympathy with the miners' standpoint, to call attention to the fact that many of the most successful industrial concerns in Britain and the United States have found it good business to pay high wages, to denounce wage-reductions as a stupid, barbarous affair, belonging properly to a less enlightened age, and to express the comfortable belief that the Commission would find some better way out than this. Thus

there had grown up a widespread expectation, reflected in many "forecasts" published in the Press, that the Commission would propose to leave wages and hours alone, and the Report, with its very different tenour, has come as a cold douche.

For our part, we have done our best to keep the realities of the situation in mind, at whatever risk of being suspected of ungenerous sentiments. We think, indeed, that the prevalence of the attitude we have outlined above is, in the main, a most welcome sign of the times. It indicates a growing understanding on the part of the middle-classes of what a reduction of wages means to the wage-earners, and a growing disinclination—which is equally healthy—to accept the views or the prejudices of employers on labour questions as the authoritative pronouncement of practical wisdom. The reaction of public opinion towards the proposals which the Mining Association submitted to the Commission was as striking, and as sound in instinct, as its reaction towards the proposal to gerrymander the League Council. But the wages of a large industry like mining cannot, unfortunately, be settled by our desires or, for that matter, by half-truths about the economy of high wages. As Sir Josiah Stamp pointed out at Leeds on Monday, it is as mischievous to try to bend the facts to our desires in this matter as it was in the matter of Reparations. And unless they were to distort the facts, the Commission could hardly have reached any other conclusions bearing upon wages than those which seem to have caused so much surprise.

What are those conclusions? On the one hand, the Commission reject the mine-owners' contention that the whole of the huge gap between proceeds and costs should be filled by a reduction of labour-costs. They recognize that there is force in the miners' reply that "wages have a great deal to do with determining prices," and bring it out in the following passage:—

"They (the miners) see the powerful tendency, in an industry organized on highly competitive individualistic lines, for prices to fall to the lowest point consistent with the costs of production, and they realize, as fully as the employers, that wages are the main item in those costs. The lower the minimum wage that they are prepared to accept, the lower is the point to which costs of production, and therefore prices, can fall, and in their view will tend to fall; if they are content to ask for a pint as a minimum and to hope for more, a pint pot and no more is the pot that the employers will provide. They have before their eyes an impressive illustration of this to-day. The recovery of the export trade under subsidy, of which much has recently been heard, has been based upon acceptance by the mine-owners of prices which, without a subsidy and without a minimum, would have given the men in December, 1925, money wages barely above the level of 1914, if not actually below it."

Throughout, the Commission keep this consideration clearly in view; they submit every proposal to the test of the effect it would have on the level of coal prices and thus on the size of the pot. Accordingly, they rule out any general extension of working-hours, because this must serve to intensify the over-production which is one of the troubles of the industry. They reject equally the idea of district autonomy in the settlement of wages and the abandonment of national negotiation, because this "opens the door to cut-throat competition between different districts at the expense of wages." They regard the prospect of the closing-down of a large number of pits as both "inevitable" and "desirable," in so far as it can be limited to the closing of definitely inefficient pits, because it will help those that remain to obtain higher prices, and thus will go some way to fill the gap. But to leave the gap to be filled entirely by this process, withdrawing the subsidy and maintaining wages at their present level, means a "contraction . . . of an altogether different order from this; it means not the disappearance of the inefficient, but the collapse of an industry. . . . We come reluctantly but unhesitatingly to the conclusion that the costs of production, with the present hours and wages, are greater than the industry can bear." The Commission indicate 10 per cent. as the order of magnitude of the wage-reduction they consider necessary. But it should not be the same in every

district. The time has come to abandon "the present system of applying one and the same uniform percentage in all districts to the wages ruling in a single year (1914)," which was not typical "of the relative position of the different districts." Subject to the principle of "national negotiation or national approval of district negotiations" new minima should be worked out for the various districts, adapted to the conditions of the present.

A 10 per cent. cut in wages is a formidable proposition for any body of wage-earners. It would be formidable even if their earnings were now notably high. Yet how is the above diagnosis to be resisted? The proposed reduction will leave the industry in the immediate future, on the Commission's calculations, without any profits in the aggregate, and the Commission contemplates, we must remember, as an inevitable corollary, the closing-down of many pits and the displacement of much labour. It is possible to argue that greater risks should be run in this direction, that a higher level of wages entailing the closing-down of still more pits and the displacement of yet further labour, would be on balance preferable. It is not unlikely that we shall come to this, if we are to obtain a peaceful settlement. Yet, manifestly, there is a point along this path beyond which disaster lies; and no one, in the light of evidence assembled by the Commission, can assert with confidence that they have fixed this point too near. This, moreover, is not the line taken by the miners and their sympathizers. The prospective closing-down of pits is to them one of the most disagreeable features of the situation, and they would certainly be most unwilling that this process should be carried unduly far.

The miners, in fact, have long since given up any attempt to argue that the industry, as it is now organized, can afford to pay wages on the present scale. They have fallen back on the demand for reorganization. The industry, they claim, could pay the present wages, or higher wages, if it were organized on proper lines. The Commission share their view that there is room for much improvement in the organization of the industry; and they make far-reaching proposals for reform. They further state, with emphasis, that "in our view, revision of the minimum percentage should depend upon acceptance by all parties of such measures of reorganization,"—by all parties, be it observed, not only by the Government, but by the mine-owners as well. In so far, therefore, as the miners' position is that it is unfair to expect them to submit to heavy wage sacrifices, so long as nothing is being done to remedy admitted inefficiencies in the industry, it would be covered by an all-round and sincere acceptance of the Report. They will be fully justified in pressing for reasonably definite undertakings, not only that the Government will do its part, but that the mine-owners will do theirs; that, for example, and in particular, the suggestion that co-operative selling agencies should be established shall not be treated as a dead letter. This is perhaps the most important, the most potentially productive, of the proposals made by the Commission, though it is cast by them in a tentative form which is somewhat unsatisfactory. Upon this and other points there is need for a clear understanding between the miners and the "other parties" as to what the execution of the Report will mean. And manifestly this will be a thorny affair if the mentality of the Mining Association is still that which it exhibited to the world in January. But if the miners show themselves ready to consider new minima, provided they have satisfactory assurances that a genuine and whole-hearted effort will be made to carry out the other side of the Report, and, if they fail to receive satisfactory assurances, they will then, if it comes to a struggle, have public opinion on their side.

The position will be very different if the miners take up an attitude of refusing to consider wage-reductions, until the measures of reorganization have been put into effect, and their harvest has been garnered. For the results of these, or any other measures, can accrue only very slowly, as the miners' leaders themselves admit, and are necessarily problematical at that. The demand for the maintenance of wages in the meantime is thus a demand for the indefinite continuance of the subsidy,

and this demand offends every criterion alike of public policy and of equity. The miners, as the Commission points out, are very far from the bottom of the wage-scale. "Hewers are earning on an average 76s. for a full week, when in unsubsidized industries, shipwrights, for example, are earning 56s. and engineering fitters 57s." Whether regard be had to the absolute amount of earnings or to the relation they bear to pre-war standards, the position of the miners compares as favourably with the mass of workers in the export industries as it does unfavourably with those in "sheltered" trades. To refuse, in these circumstances, to abate wages by one penny and to demand them, in effect, out of the taxpayer's pocket is not a reasonable proposition.

The constructive proposals of the Commission deserve a detailed scrutiny which we cannot give them here. They are almost all of them salutary and practical proposals, and they represent about as radical a policy of reorganization as it would be prudent, we think, to undertake. The four Commissioners have faithfully discharged their tremendous task.

THE CONFLICT AT GENEVA

GENEVA, MONDAY.

SOMETIMES when two innocent and useful liquids are mixed together they produce a noxious and dangerous gas. Some such result might seem to have been produced when the Locarno spirit was added to that of Geneva, for an atmosphere has arisen here during the last week which can only be compared to that existing at Paris during the Conference of 1919. That is, of course, only the superficial aspect. Neither Locarno nor Geneva is to blame, but the old war-hatred which in the very process of formal interment has suddenly taken a new lease of life. Let us hope that it is only the expiring contortions of some malign reptile that feels its deathwound, but is still able to display the febrile activity that has made it so dangerous.

The last week at Geneva has, indeed, been like no other week since the League began. All the ingenious methods of the old diplomacy have been used with almost as much venom and hatred as in 1919. After a week of it one feels as if a sewer had been substituted for the crystal waters of the lake.

Were some great material issue at stake, the future of Austria, say, or the Corridor, one could perhaps understand it. But no such issue appears. The attempt to pack the Council with new permanent members failed almost as soon as it was dragged into light. All that remained were questions of prestige. The future peace of the world has been placed in danger because this person or that cannot admit defeat in a diplomatic encounter that ought never to have taken place. In particular some French politicians, on whom the greatest responsibility must fall, since the main plot, though not some of its subsidiary ramifications, was hatched in Paris, feel humiliated.

Yet the original issue of an alteration of the Council was not simply one between Germans and the other signatories of the Locarno Pact, as the French Press has pretended. One of the worst mistakes, indeed, has been to continue the Locarno conversations here at all. But the words "conciliation" and "compromise" were used to bring back all the old loose bargaining system to Geneva. Even the Council meetings were turned into tea parties. The confusion and uncertainty thus caused make it probable that such methods will be abandoned in the future.

The issue was, of course, something quite different. It involved the Covenant itself, and Sweden's opposition was sufficient to bring the whole plot to naught. Germany, indeed, has taken up a position that in law and

fact is almost impregnable. Not being a member of the League she cannot agree to changes in its constitution before she enters it. Afterwards she is prepared to take part in any discussion according to the letter and spirit of the Covenant.

The other Locarno Powers, however, tried to get her to agree to such changes before they carried out their agreement with her. She was even asked to agree to the creation of three new permanent seats though it is understood that Britain would have vetoed that for Poland in any event. This Polish request was, indeed, soon abandoned, and the Poles seem never to have seriously maintained it. The claims of Spain and Brazil were, however, pressed with the greatest importunity. Germany refused to discuss them in accordance with her principle, and pointed out that the Council of the League was not unanimous about them. Attempts were, therefore, made to persuade M. Unden, but he refused to abandon his position in spite of manœuvres on the part of one of the interested States which can only be described as diplomatic blackmail. Britain and France were thus soon convinced that no new permanent seat could be created, and Spain and Brazil at last sullenly abandoned their claims—at any rate for the time.

Then came the celebrated attempt at compromise made on Friday last. On the initiative of Britain it was proposed that a new non-permanent seat should be created immediately for Poland. The Germans went so far as to consider this proposition for an afternoon, but eventually returned the same answer as before. Whether M. Unden yielded at all to the immense pressure brought to bear upon him by Britain and France and other members of the Council to agree to the proposal is a matter of dispute. In any case a complete deadlock resulted, and on Friday night Sir Austen Chamberlain announced that so far as he was concerned the conversations were at an end.

Discussions have, however, continued, and, as I write, it seems possible that a solution will be found by the resignation of Powers within the Council so that opportunity may be given to the Assembly to elect Poland to the place vacated. They would probably do so, since of all the claimants Poland has behaved the best, using neither menace nor threat of withdrawal. She has, indeed, more friends at Geneva at the present moment than at any other moment since the League began. But the proposal is not easy to carry out, since several Governments are involved and the issue still hangs in the balance.

Such is the melancholy story of this week. The responsibility for it cannot yet be exactly fixed, but the policies of the various Powers are clear enough. France, having made promises which she cannot carry out, less perhaps on M. Briand's initiative than on that of some permanent officials, is now endeavouring to throw the responsibility for her failure on the intransigence of Germany. Spain and Brazil simply used the opportunity to carry on an intrigue which has persisted for years to obtain a permanent seat for themselves. The latter by an ambiguous answer to Germany's request for a guarantee of a permanent seat had a sort of a case—say that of an ingenuous attorney with a doubtful client. It was, indeed, a diplomatic error on the part of Germany not to insist that the ambiguous phrases should be made quite clear.

The policy of Sweden has won the applause of fair-minded people all over Europe. She has stood by the principles of the Covenant, and by them she has so far prevailed. That a small Power has been able to resist the pressure of three Great ones is one of the best features of the whole business.

British policy has been a puzzling phenomenon. The "free hand" which Sir Austen Chamberlain obtained, subject, of course, to the necessity of bringing Germany into the League, has been interpreted in a curious way. He was, as we know, bound to Spain by some kind of promise, though not to any other Power. He has, unfortunately, construed his position as a mediator in the French sense, and by breaking off the "conversations" at the moment which he chose enabled the French to try and throw the onus of the blame on Germany. An even greater mistake was to assume, as he did, that Sweden was a mere associate of Germany rather than an impartial Power vindicating the principles of the Covenant in a manner altogether in accordance with British public opinion. His honesty, devotion to peace, and disregard of his own personal interests in pursuing his policy have been recognized on all sides. But practically all British observers have condemned his inability to recognize the great principles at stake, and that Geneva is not merely a place where accommodation is produced by bargaining, but one where nations must govern their conduct according to the rules of the Covenant.

The crisis has shown, indeed, not only the necessity of an instrument at least as formal as the Covenant, but has justified both its structure and purpose. The conspiracy has been in all essentials defeated. Germany and Sweden have been shown to have been so much in the right that they can afford to seek some method of accommodation which spares the feelings of others as much as possible. Had the present proposals been raised at the outset no difficulty would probably have arisen. But the inordinate demands that have been made have raised such passions that even the slightest concession is interpreted in terms of victory or defeat. There is really no issue of great importance now left. Only a pin-point separates the contending parties who have everything to gain and nothing to lose by a settlement. But on that pin-point stand more devils than ever a mediæval philosopher counted angels, and they have still to be exorcised.

C. K. WEBSTER.

AT ST. STEPHEN'S HIBERNATION

(BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MARCH 17TH, 1926.

EVERY day the dullest and dreariest Government of the century confronts the dullest and dreariest Opposition in the House of Commons. Behind, the audience is in the main "paper," like the audience when a Shakespearean play is put upon the British theatrical stage. Things which used to excite anger or bitterness are now merely accepted with a kind of resigned acquiescence. Some of the Labour Members make desperate attempts to put up a caricature of obstruction on the Supplementary or Army and Navy Estimates, but no one minds them occupying a certain amount of time; or competing with others, who wish to speak in order to exhibit their speaking ability, but who make no appreciable difference in the general dustiness and collapse. Mr. Lansbury's small following and the Glasgow Socialists emit the most extraordinary sentiments in denunciation of the "gentlemen of England" sitting in solemn rows opposite them. Mr. Maxton, especially, with uplifted finger, taunts and jeers, and looking like the incarnation of all revolution, announces approaching doom. George Lansbury, with his benignant side-whiskers, now decorating the front bench, hurls denunciations which are repeated with bitter ejaculations by lesser men. When such men first introduced such speeches and ideas into the House of

Commons, the place used to be stirred up like a beehive. Now all that happens is that the "gentlemen of England" eye them with a patient wonder; like tame animals looking upon some new species of carnivore whose teeth have been filed and whose claws have been pared. In the midst of these attacks, they either turn heavily in half-somnolent positions or rise and walk wearily out of the House. Nothing of this mournful oratory is ever reported in the papers which are read by the people. No one is known to read Hansard. The Tory Whips arrange that any of their big majority who wish to be absent may be about their business or pleasure until the time comes, when a due proportion sweeps through the lobby at the appointed hour and shoves through another Estimate for some unknown and unconsidered millions. It is like talking in glue. Even the Conservative front-bench members do not stay to listen to the impending orations of their own comrades. All the former elements, as one has known them for many years, of the House of Commons—which is, after all, a great debating society, where are sharpness of argument, unexpected humour, brilliancy of repartee—have for the present disappeared. The evening papers do not even take the trouble to placard the fact that there has been an all-night sitting. Attempts to brighten the proceedings by apparent violence fade into nothingness. Members like Mr. Maclean challenge the Speaker, and are suspended in what would have formerly been called a scene in the House. But the whole thing is now done expeditiously and efficiently and indifferently, resembling the reports which are read from day to day of the execution of the various murderers of the time—"Only thirty seconds elapsed between the moment when the man left his cell and when he ceased to exist." One sympathizes with the Opposition, which is being overwhelmed because it is never opposed. One sympathizes also with those new members who, ardent with the itch of speech, rise in such an atmosphere, without a cheer, and sit down without a cheer, and are never interrupted by a cheer.

This hibernation is in part, of course, due to the fact of the overwhelming majority of the Conservative supporters. There have been in previous years majorities almost as big—as the Liberal majority in 1906—but in those previous cases the Government when it entered into power with its vast battalion was usually attempting to do something, and something bitterly opposed by great masses of the people in the country; as, for example, when the Liberal Government forced through Home Rule or Mr. Lloyd George's Budget. In consequence the debates were always of a vivacious nature, and even resulted in the shouting down of Ministers or the flinging of brass-bound books, or other exhibitions of natural and legitimate passion and pride. But to-day you have an overwhelming majority supporting a Government pledged to do nothing and whose only desire is to do nothing at all, and who will not attack any problem unless it is forced into the House of Commons from outside. The only positive and large programme which the Conservative supporters believe in—that of the creation of a high protective tariff with Imperial preference—has been ruled out of this Parliament by their own leader. Mr. Baldwin, with infinite politeness and a friendly atmosphere of sympathy, establishes a pleasant, warm fog like that in a steam laundry. This is far more effective in overcoming the cry of the Socialist or the more occasional criticism of the Liberal than if he adopted any definite and particular argument against measures for change, and "I am not prepared to contradict the statement" that when one of the few violent speeches was emitted in this Parliament, that of his latest convert, Sir Alfred Mond, the kindly advice given to him by his new leader was, "Be good, sweet Mond, and let who will be clever."

Coal is shunted off to the Mining Association and the Miners' Federation with the amiable suggestion that the subject is so complex that it will demand considerable study before either makes up its mind on it. The spirit is reminiscent of the advice once given to Alice. "In that direction," the Cat said, waving its right paw round, "lives a Hatter; and in that direction"—waving its other paw—"lives a March Hare. Visit either

you like. They're both mad." And Parliament, faced with imminent crisis, is inclined to accept the verdict of that fascinating quadruped on Mr. Baldwin as on Alice, " You must be mad, or you wouldn't have come here." Geneva is looked on with some sadness and some regret, but, after all, it is " Sir Austen," who is out there, and the House had agreed to give him, by rejecting the Labour amendment, considerable flexibility of negotiation. In the case of the Naval Estimates, the only interest was the spectacle of Mr. Lansbury leading on his gallant followers in favour of our possessing no Navy at all, and the excited assertion by the Labour Party that this was remote and alien to all their ideals. This, of course, was protest for fear of the platform rather than for any purpose of the actual debate; and for the rest, the House of Commons, for the most part, gazed in gloomy silence at Mr. Bridgeman's halting efforts to explain what Naval economies or Naval expansion mean. The Army Estimates were in the same way technical, and Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, the least inspiring, perhaps, of all the uninspiring speakers who occupy the Government bench, read typewritten statements on problems of mechanization of warfare, and technical concerns of Army detail, without confronting any general debate as to whether the whole expenditure on the Army should be challenged by those who demand economy.

The Economy Bill, " mean, stupid, and cowardly," debated on Tuesday, produced a surprise. Mr. Churchill, after a few desultory remarks on the subject under discussion, and realizing the unpopularity of the measure, launched out for something approaching two hours into a general disquisition on the whole question of finance, which was in reality the first part of his Budget speech, and was quite irrelevant to the measure whose second reading he was moving. He spoke well, as usual, and fluently, as usual, and with humour and good temper. But he failed to hold his audience, who melted away towards the end. It is quite evident that the complete failure of his promise last year of a progressive reduction of ten millions every year has rendered the party he has joined suspicious of his ability as Chancellor and sceptical of him as a future leader. They will laugh with him and listen to him, but they will not follow him, and he has made no progress in the affections or allegiance of the rank and file since he first joined them. Mr. Snowden fell upon him with shattering force, describing him as labouring for at least a year, and producing an abortion, not worthy even of the maternity benefit. Sir John Simon subjected the Bill to a merciless dissection of an even more damaging kind. And the efforts of Mr. Duff Cooper, to whom apparent success has given an air of insolence and arrogance irritating even to his own supporters, failed to stem the tide. Mr. Churchill, with his customary disastrous lack of judgment, has chosen to challenge simultaneously the three greatest organized forces in the country—the teachers, the local authorities, and the great friendly and approved societies. The atmosphere was, in consequence, funereal. Nothing can prevent the Bill from passing if the Government desire it, but Members are expecting a day of reckoning in the constituencies, and are already cursing the Government for bringing this trouble on their heads.

LIFE AND POLITICS

EVERYBODY is puzzling over the strange case of Sir Austen Chamberlain. Why has he persisted so obstinately in cutting the throat of his own reputation? Stupidity would explain it, but Sir Austen is not so stupid as all that. He must have known what everyone at home was thinking, and Mr. Baldwin gave him perfectly definite marching orders. He knew too, as well as anyone, that it will not do to plead that as Germany made no conditions at Locarno, conditions could be forced upon her afterwards to please France. That would be trickery, and Sir Austen is no trickster. I think he has been betrayed by his famous loyalty.

When the Coalition broke up he stuck to Mr. Lloyd George in the teeth of all his interests and nearly ruined himself politically. He had given his word, and that was everything. He showed an even fantastic sense of honour when he resigned from the India Office in the War. In this case he had unquestionably given his word or half his word to Briand: that was enough; for the rest he trusted to muddle through at Geneva. But his honesty proved no protection in the poison-gas atmosphere of greed, suspicion, and war passion which his own weakness had let loose there. To think that one plain word a month ago would have saved him from this humiliation, and, what matters more, saved Great Britain and the League from contempt!

* * *

"*Cet animal est méchant ; quand on l'attaque,*" &c. The importing interests of London, I see, are being wicked enough to defend themselves against Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister and his policy of Protection by instalments. These firms have no politics, or at least their new Society is not a political move. It is simply an attempt to throw up some cover against continual new interferences with their business. The Government will listen to manufacturers, but cares little for the complaints of mere unorganized importers, for whom in practice Safeguarding duties mean vexations, delays, and expense. The latest nuisance is the Merchandise Marks Bill, which is going to help British trade by enforcing the branding of foreign goods as foreign, as if anybody will refrain from buying them for that reason—other things being equal. Powerful trade interests haunt the backstairs of the Board of Trade for favours, while the case of the great entrepôt interests goes more or less by default. The importers simply want the machinery of international trade to be protected from grit thrown into the wheels by Tariff pedants and industries that know how to work the officials.

* * *

The Broadcasting of House of Commons debates is not likely to come just yet, though it is inevitable. The Tories, in their famous zeal for the dignity of Parliament, are against it for the moment. They think, and with justice, that the House would become even less a place of debate, and even more a sounding-board for reaching the outside multitude. Members would address Mr. Microphone and not Mr. Speaker. But broadcasting will certainly win in the end; Parliamentary traditions will not count for much against the itch to reach the largest audience. It will be hailed as a means of stimulating public interest in the debates, now at low-water mark. I don't suppose the opposition of the newspapers will count for much. The broadcasting of big debates might throw the Parliamentary reporters out of action, for many big newspaper offices and all the "agencies" have their receiving set, and speeches are regularly "taken down" in the office. It is probably too late for the papers to fight the broadcasting of news. Broadcasting is a formidable competitor of the reporter already. Before we have done we may see riots of starving reporters wrecking broadcasting machinery like the frame breakers of old.

* * *

I am warned by friends that to venture an opinion on the Bloomsbury site wrangle is to stick one's head into a hornets' nest. Five years of controversy have sharpened tempers. What seemed to the simple outsider a magnificent gift worth half a million has roused the angry passions of learned disputants, who scornfully look the gift-horse in the mouth. Some think the proper thing to do with a gift-horse is to kill it. The students are pluckily trying to save the situation at the eleventh hour. Mr. Churchill would be only too glad of the

excuse which the timidity and divided counsels of invertebrate university organization give him to sneak out of the offer. It would suit his book exactly. If King's, for reasons sufficient to itself, refuses to leave its splendid quarters on the Embankment, why should not the rest of the university enter on its inheritance, and make use of the site in one of many splendid ways? The students have got hold of the important thing: that it is a disgrace to London that alone of the great cities she has no great central university building. The Government presented the University of London with a site, and the University has presented the Government with a good excuse for taking it away again.

* * *

As a study in popular psychology the agitation about Kitchener's death is interesting. In all ages people have been unwilling to accept the rational explanation of a great—or bulky—man's death. The myth-making faculty is as lively as ever. Recently the emotionalism of the crowd has been cunningly exploited in a series of articles in a Sunday newspaper. The movement culminated the other day in a strange meeting, when the arts of suggestion, cleverly aided by a film, were used to give the impression that Kitchener was betrayed. By whom? You can take your choice in a swarm of innuendoes. One meets people who get to the point, and assert that the Government of the day got rid of Kitchener, and incidentally of six hundred harmless sailors. The story of Kitchener's death is comparatively tame. According to this version Jellicoe asked Kitchener to postpone sailing for a day or two to give time to sweep the Channel of the mines which were known to have been sent adrift in the gale. He refused, and the "Hampshire" butted into a nest of mines and sank like a stone, off a precipitous shore, and it was a marvel anyone was saved at all. This, I repeat, is the story told to me by responsible people in the Grand Fleet, and it looks reasonable enough. I haven't read all the literature. The myth, no doubt, will go on flourishing, and as a friend remarked to me, "No doubt in a century or so the historians will be hinting that Kitchener was murdered by the Government, and somebody will forge a letter from Lloyd George to the Admiralty instructing them to send him on to the mines." A good exciting mystery will beat mere facts any day.

* * *

The greatest of New Englanders, Dr. C. W. Eliot of Harvard, is ninety-two years old to-day. It cannot be said that he is still hale and active, as he was until well past the eighties, for letters from Boston friends tell of his having at last been driven to accept the fact, and the inescapable privileges, of age. He is a very noble old Roman, having behind him not only forty years of distinguished service as president of Harvard University, but also an unsurpassed record as scholar-citizen—a breed that has become rare in the United States. I know nothing more strikingly illustrative of the imperfect relations between the best of England and the best of America than the extraordinary fact that Charles W. Eliot should be unknown among us, except for the, relatively speaking, very few English people who have met him in his own land. Twice, to my knowledge, he refused the London Embassy. One cannot help wondering what London society would have made of this complete Bostonian. Bryce and he exchanged letters regularly and copiously over a long period, and never were two correspondents more perfectly matched—in spirit and aim, if not in factual knowledge. It is our people's loss that they have not known Dr. Eliot: but none the less can we all salute a powerful and gracious veteran of that New England that is so near to the Old.

The prize for the most brilliant misprint of the week goes to the *Times* for the following sentence in its report of Mr. Lloyd George's speech on the Salvation Army: "It was easier to persuade the heathen to part with their most treasured idols than to induce the politician to part with the *funds* which he adored." The word used by Mr. Lloyd George was "feuds."

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FASCISM AND FORGERY

SIR—I apologize for not replying earlier to the correspondents who have criticized my letter in your issue of February 13th. That pleasure was deferred only because I had much to do in Budapest and other European capitals, where my *Nation* followed me inconstantly.

Mr. Robert Dell, concerned about the corruption of my manners by the "Awakening Magyars," reveals his own standard of manners by raising the question of the "handsome" salary I received as financial adviser to the Hungarian Government, and my qualifications for earning it. It would be as pertinent to the discussion, and as mannerly, if I were to tell your readers how much Mr. Dell was paid for his article on "Fascism and Forgery," and to express my own opinion as to whether he was underpaid or overpaid.

Mr. Dell's incursions into my private affairs happen to be just as inaccurate as his statements about Hungary. His assumptions that I am on intimate terms with the "Awakening Magyars," that I received a salary of £3,000 a year, that I am now trying to raise a loan for Poland, and that the leading article on Hungary in the *Times* of February 4th was either written or inspired by me are all untrue. As the same ridiculous story regarding the *Times* article has been mentioned in the *Paris Press*, I may say that I knew nothing about that article until I read it in the *Times*. Mr. Dell says the article repeated almost verbatim an interview with me in the *Observer*. It may be mortifying to Mr. Dell, but it scarcely seems surprising that leader writers on the *Times* and other newspapers accept the publicly and privately expressed statements of Englishmen with first-hand knowledge of Hungarian affairs in preference to the fantastic concoctions of those who get their information at third or fourth hand from notoriously vindictive sources. So much for the distasteful personal issues.

Not one of the facts adduced by Mr. Dell in *THE NATION* of February 27th to prove the alleged complicity of the Hungarian Government with the franc forgeries is true. As both Mr. Dell and Mrs. L'Estrange Malone appear to think that my previous genuine reluctance to abuse the hospitality of your space by giving detailed denials to Mr. Dell's many misstatements was in reality a tribute to Mr. Dell's unusual accuracy, I must ask you on this occasion to allow me the privilege of replying *seriatim*.

Mr. Dell admits he was wrong in saying that Count Bethlen, the Hungarian Prime Minister, and Count Teleki were brothers-in-law. "They are cousins," he now declares. That is also untrue. Count Bethlen and Count Teleki are not even cousins. Their respective wives happen to be cousins. The two men are only remotely connected. As I said in my previous letter, the question of relationship or otherwise has no bearing on the case, but the insistence with which it is dragged in shows up in its true light the unclean campaign to discredit by any lie the Hungarian Prime Minister.

Mr. Dell maintains he was right, despite my denial, in saying that Count Teleki had an official connection with the Cartographical Institute, where the forged notes were printed, because "that Institute is under the joint control of the Institute of the Society of Geography, of which Count Teleki is President, and the Ministry of War." That is untrue. The Institute of the Society of Geography has nothing whatever to do with the Cartographical Institute.

Mr. Dell says Count Bethlen "has now admitted to the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry that Windisch-Grätz

told him about his little plans at the end of 1922 or the beginning of 1923." That is untrue. Count Bethlen made no such statement to the Parliamentary Committee, and Windisch-Grätz made no such statement to Count Bethlen.

Mr. Dell continues: "Count Bethlen thereupon informed Count Teleki, who had already, he found, heard about the matter from Windisch-Grätz." That is untrue. The only approach to truth in Mr. Dell's attempt to implicate Count Bethlen is that the Prime Minister did instruct the Chief of Police, but not in the way or under the circumstances stated by Mr. Dell.

Fortified by a complete falsification of recorded evidence, Mr. Dell triumphantly asks, "Is any further proof needed of the complicity of the Hungarian Government?" and declares that Count Bethlen's own admissions make it impossible to believe in his good faith.

The report of the Hungarian Parliamentary Commission is an official document available to Mr. Dell or anyone else. The falsity of all the facts cited by Mr. Dell in his effort to convict the Hungarian Government can be established by reference to that report.

As Mr. Dell says that a statement by a qualified representative of the Hungarian Government would have been more interesting than my own opinions, I am authorized to say that the foregoing denials are made with the authority of the Hungarian Government.

Mr. Dell is equally unfortunate in his reference to the official Note from the Government of Czechoslovakia to the Hungarian Government, which, he states, "threatens nothing worse than an appeal to the League of Nations." The Note in question contains no reference whatever to the League of Nations.

It must be almost incredible to readers of THE NATION that a writer of Mr. Dell's standing could make so many misstatements of fact in connection with a matter which is *sub judice* and which involves the good faith of a friendly Government and the personal integrity of a distinguished Prime Minister. In his last letter Mr. Dell himself throws some light on the anomaly. The present Hungarian Government, according to Mr. Dell, is "a corrupt and blood-stained oligarchy to whose tender mercies the Hungarian people have been handed over without their consent." That being so, it is not surprising that Mr. Dell takes almost for granted the complicity of the Hungarian Government in the franc forgery plot. Indeed, such complicity would be a minor iniquity compared with their other scarlet sins. Mr. Dell's view is shared—or possibly inspired—by the handful of Hungarians who support Count Michael Károlyi and who, from their exile in Paris, Vienna, and elsewhere, agitate unceasingly for the restoration of the short-lived and inglorious Hungarian Republic. With the support of the extreme Left in France and other countries, these agitators carry on active propaganda against Hungary and the Hungarian Government. They vainly tried to wreck the League's reconstruction plan, and here in Geneva the various League Delegations tell me they receive by almost every post from Paris bitterly vindictive propaganda against the Bethlen Government. It is from these sources, working sometimes more, sometimes less, in liaison with the small Socialist Opposition in Hungary, that most of the so-called news about Hungary emanates. The activity of the propagandists is only equalled by their childish disregard of truth. With more than an average experience of lies for publication, even I have been flabbergasted by the extravagance of their inventions. Now and again these inventions mislead the most experienced journalists—even, perhaps, Mr. Dell.

If Mr. Dell really wants to know what is happening in Hungary, instead of writing articles on the strength of information he gets in Paris, I am authorized by that "corrupt and bloodstained oligarchy"—the Hungarian Government—to say that if he comes to Hungary he will be given every facility for obtaining information. If Mr. Dell will then not confine his conversations to the Opposition, but will talk on the spot to people of all and of no political complexion, he will begin to understand if not to appreciate why the existing Government has the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian people and of almost every dispassionate foreign resident. If Mrs. L'Estrange Malone could also go to Budapest she would also quickly discover that the present Hungarian Government is not in

power because it is "propped up" by British influence, as she suggests in her letter in THE NATION of February 20th. She would also probably get some idea of the various undercurrents, few of them "humane or progressive," which work towards a change of Government. And she is quite wrong in saying that the Hungarian Government contemplated any new loan and therefore desired to "hush up" the forgery affair. That was an unworthy suggestion for which I am sure she will apologize.

I am inclined to agree with Mr. Street that if Count Teleki's explanation of his connection with the forgery affair were typical of Hungary there would be a good deal to be said for Mr. Dell's assertion that it is a land of comic opera. But I am still of the opinion that the more faithful picture of Hungary is to be found in the monthly reports of Commissioner-General Smith, who, with convincing detachment, shows the loyalty and sacrifice with which Hungary is fulfilling all her obligations to the League and to her creditors.

The League have not seen fit—and I venture to think wisely—to adopt Mr. Dell's proposal of an investigation into the Hungarian forgeries. In fact, the forgeries have not been discussed at all, although Hungary's affairs have been dealt with in two Committees and by the Council. It has been generally recognized in Geneva that the question is *prima facie* an internal affair which is now *sub judice*, and that the Hungarian Government are taking all possible steps to enforce justice regardless of persons. There will be no delay in the trial of the accused. It will be a public trial, and until it is over the example in propriety set by the League might well be followed.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM GOODE.

Geneva, March 13th, 1926.

TRADE UNIONISM

SIR,—I read with interest the letter under the above heading in your journal of March 6th, but I think the author has got a wrong impression, or is trying to give somebody else one. I cannot, as a worker, see "that the more profit an employer makes the better for his men." Certainly better for the employer. He will probably go to the sunny south for a month extra or replenish his private garage. I have never come across a case where the worker has got any direct benefit. He never or rarely knows his employer's profits. North Country firms seem to fancy publishing their reports in London papers, so that they rarely reach the eyes of the men.

Rather than "reducing the average wage of British workmen," I, along with scores of other working people, sincerely believe that trades unionism has helped and is helping to stabilize a decent level of life.

Mankind, or working people, are demanding a steady progressive standard of life. I think they are getting this as the result of trades unionism and like organizations. Had there been no trade unions heaven knows what sort of a plight the workers would have been in now. There is one thing I will say about it; a great crisis is just ahead. Public opinion is changing. Trade unions need reorganizing.

I took the letter as an insult to the trades unions and to their members, hence my humble protest.

Thanking you in anticipation.—Yours, &c.,

A NEW READER.

March 11th, 1926.

DELACROIX

SIR,—I have a quarrel, as serious as that of Mr. Dobréé, with Mr. Roger Fry's article on the current exhibition at the French Gallery. In it he says: "Delacroix is seen as perhaps never before in London in the exhilarating composition of an 'Episode of the Greek War of 1856.' I scarcely know another picture in which the peculiar qualities of Delacroix as an illustrator, as a composer, and as a colourist are shown to such advantage."

This seems to me a most unwarranted statement, and one unfair to, or, I would rather say, misleading about, that great artist.

We possess in the Wallace Collection one of Delacroix's admitted masterpieces, the "Marino Faliero," and a sketch

at South Kensington of "Le Barque du Don Juan" (I am not sure I have the title quite correct) much more typical of the vital ingredients of his mind than the rather showy little work at the French Gallery, and both far removed by their lofty conception, their dignity, and the very force of their dramatic intensity from what Mr. Fry, speaking of his work generally, calls "the feeling of the footlights and the circus."

Delacroix had an immense prestige (which, had he merely "gone back to Rubens," to quote Mr. Roger Fry again, would never have existed), not only with the Impressionists, but with Cézanne, who would defend him with a violence liable to become physical.

Millet, with the felicity of his all too rare *obiter dicta*, said: "The pictures of Delacroix I thought great in gesture, invention, and colour."

It seems to me unsuitable to compare Delacroix's use of colour to that of Corot, but in the "Marino Faliero" there is, to my mind, as complete a harmony as in Corot's charming "Honfleur," only, of course, of an entirely different order and much more difficult to achieve.

Mr. Fry is so great a connoisseur of pictures that I hesitate to oppose him, yet I feel that for once he has done less than justice to an artist of the first importance, and to the unerring tact and foresight of a truly great collector.—Yours, &c.,

ALDERSEY ROOME.

Grovelands, Beechwood Avenue, Weybridge.

March 14th, 1926.

VOLTAIRE

SIR,—I have recently published a book on Voltaire.

The whole trend of that miserable performance went to show that the interest and importance of Voltaire do not arise from the fact that he was one of the fathers of nineteenth-century English Liberalism.

Whereupon THE NATION laboriously and tediously informs me that the interest and importance of Voltaire arise from the fact that he was one of the fathers of nineteenth-century English Liberalism.

Is this Socratic irony or massive stupidity?

Let us sacrifice a goose in the Temple of Concord and close an incident equally painful and discreditable to all concerned.—Yours, &c.,

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

JAPANESE POETRY

SIR,—Mr. Whymant's article (January 30th, 1926) invites me to suggest how this writer is a good example of our saying that ignorance is happiness. He seems to believe that there are no forms of poetry in Japan except the *hokku* and the *tanka*. He does not know that even one thousand years ago our poets wrote such exquisite lyrics of more than one hundred lines. (See the *Man-nyo-shu*.) This writer is also so bold to say that "the *tanka* is merely a developed *hokku*," because they are quite different from each other, and the *hokku* is one of the forms created much later than the *tanka*. Moreover, it shows his incapacity of saying about poetry because he distinguishes poetry and prose simply by the standard of length, rhyme, metre, and other mechanical forms. Poetry is not a mechanism. I may ask why it is not poetry because we have no rhyme. Is rhyme such an important element to make poetry?

Finally, I should like to ask whether he knows the younger generation of Japan have been struggling for the creation of new poetry. We have worked and achieved a great deal during the last fifty years. (Only see an Annual Anthology published by the *Shi wa Kwai*.) It is unintelligibly strange that our poetry is represented absolutely distorted by the Western mind.—Yours, &c.,

KIYOSHI SATO.

February 21st, 1926.

THE REALIST

By CLIVE BELL

ABOUT the year 1850 artistic opinion in France was divided between those who worshipped Ingres and those who preferred Delacroix: for Barbizon, with Corot and Millet, was regarded, in so far as it was regarded at all, as a province of the romantic left. The chiefs eyed each other with suspicion, choleric on the part of the old tyrant, on that of Delacroix urbane: Chassériau was attempting, not unsuccessfully, a syncretism: while the followers of both camps had duly fraternized over the plunder, though still calling each other, to keep up the excitement, such hard names as "pompiers" and "farceurs." It was time for a hearty quarrel; and manifestly the cue for any vulgar, pushing fellow who thought of picking it was to declare himself the enemy of both Ingres and Delacroix. Now Courbet, besides being one of the greatest painters of the century, was both vulgar and pushing, so he proclaimed himself a rebel and cried a plague on both houses. To be exact, he proclaimed himself, or allowed himself to be proclaimed, a realist; and a realist he was in the sense that Chardin, Teniers, or for that matter Homer, were realists. However, the name was a good one, and he saw to it that it should stick. That it meant little or nothing never troubled Courbet. He was not in the habit of troubling much about "meanings"—least of all about the meanings of words.

Courbet was a strapping young peasant from the Franche-Comté, radical and republican by tradition, and a born painter. He was moved by the solidity and freshness of his native rocks and glens, by all the gear of a small-holder's existence, by the rustic activities

amongst which he had been brought up, and by the copious and often splendid forms of women in the class to which he belonged. By these inspired, he painted like an old master—like an old master literally; uninspired, he painted like a preternaturally royal academician. He claimed to "give real nature with all her crudities and violences." A camera could have done as much. Had he gone on to add, as well he might, that he converted "real nature" into art, one could have replied that Homer had done the same three thousand years earlier. And why, pray, was a picture of a dead rabbit by Chardin less real than one of a dead roebuck by Monsieur Courbet?

Often when Courbet said he was a realist he meant that he was a radical, which he sometimes called being a Socialist. It was the greatest ass in Europe, Prudhon, who put this notion into his head. Prudhon was a Socialist all right:—

"Dix mille citoyens qui ont appris le dessin forment une puissance de collectivité artistique, une force d'idées, une énergie d'idéal bien supérieure à celle d'un individu, et qui, trouvant un jour son expression, dépassera le chef-d'œuvre." (*Principe de l'art*.)

Courbet, on the other hand, was an artist, and therefore an individualist. However, he found no difficulty in agreeing with Prudhon, to about one of whose words of wisdom he probably attended in every thousand. Besides, he made a habit of agreeing with people who praised him. So Prudhon was allowed to write a book in which he explained art by explaining that Courbet was the only great artist, and that he was a great artist because he was a pioneer of the Social Commonwealth; while Champfleury, Max Buchon, and Castagnary were

all writing books or articles to explain why Courbet was a Realist. And to Courbet it all came to much the same thing; anyhow, all were working together for good. They were keeping Courbet in the public eye; and in the casino at Frankfort—according to Courbet—notices had to be posted: "Ici, il est défendu de parler de M. Courbet." For the rest, he was a thorough radical by temperament—by reason he was nothing. As a member of the Commune he showed more sense—less folly, at any rate—than most of his colleagues. He protected the Louvre, and would, apparently, have protected the Tuilleries; and it does not much matter whether or no he was responsible for pulling down the Vendôme Column. That he was persecuted by the Government of the Third Republic is not surprising; but that his pictures should have been excluded from public exhibition by his fellows, notwithstanding the protests of almost all the good artists in France and some of the bad, is the most natural thing in the world and a disgrace to humanity.* Courbet died miserably in exile at La Tour de Peilz just outside Vevey in 1877.

Courbet painted his first large picture, "Après-dîner à Ornans," in 1849, and with it posed the question about which critics were to excite themselves for the next twenty years. It was a huge canvas, presenting a group of common people, a table, plates, glasses, fragments, Courbet's big dog. What—said the critics—what can justify a canvas of these dimensions being consecrated neither to religion, mythology, history, nor romance, but to a "vulgar" subject. There is no justification. Monsieur Courbet is a Realist. Few thought it worth adding that the picture was superbly painted. But superbly painted it was, and that is its justification. Also, it is the justification of every successful work Courbet ever produced.

They say it was Bonvin who induced the vainglorious cub with the magnificent, uncultivated gift, to go to the Louvre and copy. If so, it was Bonvin who did him the best turn he ever was done. Courbet learnt painting from the old masters: from Ribera, Velasquez, Rembrandt, and Hals especially. Possibly it was because they all could in a sense be considered realistic that he went to them; much more probably because they appealed to the painter that was in him. At any rate, since he unquestionably was a Realist, and since these appealed to him, it stood to reason that they were realists too. They must have "given real nature, with all her crudities and violences": them one could study without danger or shame. And when, happily inspired by his surroundings, he found means, through their style, of formalizing and externalizing his own vision, he firmly believed that he was being dreadfully realistic and rebellious. For certain it is that Courbet, perhaps the most eclectic of modern masters, the one who profited most by long days spent in galleries, believed himself the most spontaneous and unorthodox; that Courbet, the master of plastic manipulation, fancied himself uncompromisingly direct. Positively, it seems never to have entered his head that the pictures of Velasquez and Rembrandt were not faithful renderings of facts but of intense emotion for facts. Quite conceivably he believed that his own pictures were true to nature in the way of photographs.

Like Rembrandt and Velasquez, Courbet had a passion for facts—may be less fine, less intense, than theirs, and certainly less constant. From them he learnt to snare and surround this passion in paint. He had little imagination and no critical sense; consequently, when passion failed, he became a realist indeed—a realist in the sense that the dexterous late Victorians (say Millais

grown old) were realists. In the middle of a superbly conceived composition he would suddenly lose interest in a detail, or more probably lose hold of the authentic vision, and paint a stone or a branch, not as he felt it, but as he thought it should be. That is popular Realism—the rendering of objects as the grocer believes he sees them: and this "realistic" detail by Courbet, detached from the whole, would not have looked too much out of place in a Royal Academy exhibition about the year 1880. Consider that marvellously painted "Atelier" in the Louvre—a vast composition unfortunately marred by the shocking incoherence of the design. In the middle is the beautiful nude and the heap of ravishing drapery, the delicious, half-finished landscape on the easel, and Courbet himself in striped trousers; but to pull the pattern to a centre something was needed still (incidentally, the something produced did not have the desired effect), and so Courbet invented a white cat. Courbet could not invent. Doubtless he studied white cats; but his heart was not in this one. Assuredly, of the original conception she was no part. Wherefore he drew her as might have drawn her the illustrators of Christmas Numbers; not omitting that classic gesture which, brightly rendered by the three-colour process, never fails to win from the head of the family a smile and from the youngest a crow of delight—the playful paw uplifted. Where were Rembrandt and Velasquez then? Away in a café perhaps, sitting with the Courbet who could feel passionately for the foaming pots of beer and the lusty trollops that served them, leaving the conceited artisan, who also was Courbet, to make a drawing which expressed nothing but "represented" him faithfully enough.

Such, however, were not the questions about which critics, poets, novelists, politicians, philosophers, and rich ladies came to cuffs in the rattling days of the "rasta" empire. These, like the rest of the great public, though they rarely leave painters alone, rarely take an interest in painting: for the excellent reason that they rarely know what painting is. What they like to wrangle about is "subject." Courbet, we know from his letters, painted "Les Casseurs de Pierres" in 1850 without the glimmer of a political intention. The scene inspired him. It was one with which he, brawny and indefatigable rejoicer in his own splendid strength, could sympathize thoroughly. He could transmit through his own nerves and muscles its intense yet subtle rhythm. He felt what he saw with passion and turned his feelings into paint. Along comes *le camarade Proudhon*; assures him he has painted the first great socialist picture, emits a flood of unfathomable nonsense, and hails the young peasant saviour of society. Courbet makes no objection. And so the fun begins. "Le Réalisme est une aspiration démocratique," bleats Champfleur. "Ne voyez-vous pas s'ouvrir de nouveaux horizons?" booms Thoré. While Napoleon III. slaps a *Baigneuse* with his switch; and the Empress, who has gone to the *salon* to see a picture of horses by her favourite Rosa Bonheur, inquires before the Courbet "Est-ce aussi une percheronne?" Critics less sportive or witty merely denounced Courbet's art as "vulgar"; he delights, they complained, in the lowest types of humanity, in the least elevating scenes. To which the master, with characteristic silliness, replied that if he never painted angels it was because he had never seen any. Nevertheless, whatever fatuities Courbet, under the tuition of the philosophers, might pay out to astonish the public, he was too much of a painter to be irremediably foolish about painting. And in the manifesto—silly enough, God knows—prefixed to the catalogue of his exhibition in 1855, he firmly puts the prophets in their place, justly observing that "le titre de Réaliste m'a été imposé comme on a imposé aux

* Meissonier was the leader of the anti-Courbet party.

hommes de 1830 le titre de Romantiques." In this moment of lucidity it will perhaps be well to leave him. And, anyhow, he need not have bothered much about the absurd things said of him by the public or the hardly less absurd he said about himself. What Proudhon and Castagnary and the Empress Eugénie and Courbet himself said is unlikely to be remembered long. But the teacher of Manet and animator of the Impressionists and Cézanne will not easily be forgotten; and the creator of those masterpieces in the Petit Palais will be admired always as one of the masters of modern painting.

THE LOST LEGION

"There is a world outside the one you know
To which for curioseness 'Ell can't compare—
It is the place where 'wilful-missings' go,
As we can testify, for we are there."

—Kipling's "Wilful-Missing."

EVERY now and then still appears in the Press a tale of the return of some old warrior-wanderer, only now induced (and probably by some quite illogical freak of memory) to revisit his home town and whatever kith and kin may be living on there. What, then, of those others who may never return, the legion to which, though they are scattered everywhere as individuals, these tardily substantive people belonged?

At every such announcement, my own mind flies back to a tour South by two of us during Armistice days—a brief French leave while we were yet in khaki. At that time we were, at certain times and places, disposed to make too much of the romance of it, and this was perhaps natural enough. But if, in any case, we ever imagined it was romance that was unique of its kind, we were even more sadly at fault. We almost invariably found, in the most unlikely places, that we had not by any means the prerogatives which would attach to those unique beings, the only representatives of H.M. Army on the spot. Sometimes, indeed, we appeared to be merely a long way down in a series of newcomers, and this became first a matter of concern, then of some irritation, and finally of amusement and intrigue. We were very far, in kilos, from any seat of war, but then all Europe was a series of battlefields, and of links between battlefields. So that it was hardly to be expected that flotsam and jetsam would not be found in these realms of peace, even though, as far as the British authorities were concerned, they were almost uncharted.

It must be confessed that, on starting from Marseilles, G. and I had become so militarized that we simply could not imagine a town without a British A.P.M. and his band of police vigilants. Our eyes were first opened to the possibilities of liberty hitherto undreamed of by a casual docker in khaki travelling from Tarascon to Cete to rejoin a little band of six, employed, we gathered, in unloading tinned fruit from Spanish coasters. He spoke of civilian hours and of ever-open cafés, of whole towns within bounds and entirely lacking in regulations concerning saluting, methods of wearing puttees, and "correct attire" generally, which had been wont to irk us intolerably. We could hardly believe our ears. Darkly we foresaw that we might soon be doing the most stupendous things—failing to salute in unison or to have flat pockets, or generally to lack the correct and soldierlike bearing so essential to the prestige carefully built up by generations of good button-polishers.

Then there were rumours of one or two of our men having been seen in Toulouse, but we could not get them confirmed. In Lourdes, however, Lourdes of the pil-

grims, we suddenly descried, just when we were beginning to swagger about like brigadier-generals, a casual lance-corporal of the R.F.A., leaning against the door of his hotel, and, moreover, engaged in negligent conversation with two W.A.A.C.s! It was a blow, it cannot be denied. It was a blow! And later, we were almost relieved when a blasé private turned up near the Cathedral and greeted us with the air of the experienced traveller. He had been driving his "guv'nor" (some prowling Engineer specialist) round about on some of his specialist inspecting. Though what he was doing in Lourdes he could not say. Seeing, possibly, that the gifts of the British pilgrims at the Cathedral were well and truly laid. . . .

Other adventures with the fringes of the Army were awaiting us, and perhaps the queerest was at Bayonne. We had seen Bayonne, and never a Britisher, and we were recrossing the river-bridge to the station side when the strange appearance of an approaching figure drew our attention. It was certainly the normal Basque cap, blue and round, on his head. But the rest of him was in British khaki—puttees, beltless, but unmistakable. We were undecided at first—a French straggler perhaps. But, without any preliminaries, there floated to us in rich Cockney, there on the middle of Bayonne Bridge, "Aven't seen any Engineers about 'ere, I s'pose?" We hadn't, and we told him so conversationally. But he didn't want to talk, though he had hardly seen an Englishman for months. He wasn't interested in us in the slightest. He wanted his "relief," and his relief hadn't turned up. . . . So here he was, a casual Royal Engineer, waiting for another Royal Engineer, who appeared to be lost somewhere in the South of France, to come and carry on his Royal little job while he went to England on leave. And he'd been in this blinkin' place a year now and didn't think he'd ever get demobbed. He'd soon be speakin' the lingo, but he wouldn't mind that if he hadn't lost his Service hat the day before, and now, due to go on leave to Blighty, had nothing to wear but this blanked Basque cap, and no means of getting anything. It was a nice blanked thing for a respectable Engineer having to go to a respectable place like England in a blanked Basque cap. We were sure we hadn't seen an Engineer anywhere! And, after looking at our badges suspiciously, in case we might be his reliefs without admitting it, he shambled on moodily, and we went away marvelling.

There were even stranger things at Pau. In a little street-corner group we saw some R.N.A.S. men, whose job it had been to save one of our Handley-Page machines that, after flying round Madrid, had fallen into the sea between Bayonne and Biarritz. They didn't appreciate it. Like Mr. Kipling's marine, they "never saw the fun from first to last." They carried on most stolidly that tradition of British phlegm in Pau. Here they were, stuck out in a French aerodrome with nothing to do, &c., &c. Not even a Y.M.C.A. in the town where you could get Billiards. . . . What a nation! What a nation! But something had stirred them, and that was, naturally, the sight of a Britisher who did not appear to be "fed up" with Pau, whereat they were most reasonably annoyed. They pointed him out to us as he passed. He was in ranker's khaki, but it was a most excellent fit, with well-creased slacks, and with open jacket showing the vestige of a tie. He wore a Service cap in rakish fashion and carried a stylish mac, and with him were two girls (the secret source, we suspected, of the irritation of the R.N.A.S.). He stared at us a little across the road, waved a hand easily, went on to do a little shopping, and disappeared. The R.N.A.S. gave us to understand that they had seen him

shopping every day during their three weeks at Pau, and that without doubt he was a "runaway." They had all sorts of suspicions, each worse than the last.

Well, I have no doubt that France has on her soil settlers from all the great Armies, fugitive Britishers, Canucks, Aussies, Yanks—and their descendants. Germans even, forgotten in some queer way, and possibly Indians and Chinese labourers! Just watch the newspapers and you will see these romances cropping up from time to time. The war has left France some strange legacies, and not the least of them these men who have found lures that have bound them to her soil—women, wine, or the wander-lust—so that their pasts are annihilated, and their countries will not see them again. Here, anyway, is a Salute to you, Gentlemen Adventurers, Knights of the Road, Companions of the Order of the Man Who Was, Wilful-Missings, The Legion of the Lost, against whose Regimental—and domestic—Records in the home towns stands an Everlasting Query.

L. A. P.

THE DRAMA

COSMIC DRAMA

Gate Salon Theatre: "Masses and Man." By Ernst Toller.
Regent Theatre: "From Morn to Midnight." By Georg Kaiser.

"Here do I sit and wait, old broken tables around me and also half-written tables. When cometh mine hour?"—ZARATHUSTRA.

THE simultaneous appearance in London of two Expressionist plays is, of course, very interesting: the reading public, having heard legends of unbelievable glory and intelligence, will be able to make up its mind for itself. As productions, both by Mr. Peter Godfrey, the Gate Salon performance is the more interesting, with its stylized pictures, and rather effective groupings and noises. But though to hear men talking as if they were machines may amuse M. Bergson very much, in time it becomes excessively boring to ordinary folk, and moreover, Miss Molly Venness as The Woman spoke so slowly as to be incomprehensible. Both plays were acted too much in the dark, and this becomes very fatiguing, not to the eye, but to the ear. As regards "From Morn to Midnight," I would like to say this: that before, I had only suspected Mr. Claude Rains of being in the first rank of our actors: now I know he is.

One can say that Expressionism is at least a plucky attempt to orientate the drama in a world where no values are universally accepted. It is an attempt at creation out of the void, but the result is that the authors seem to be struggling to express something beyond experience. In their attempt to do without values they are trying to state absolute truth. Now seeing that truth is a dubious thing, and at any rate a matter for science rather than for art, what is interesting is the emotions that gather round a supposed "truth": again, the mere statement of "truths" is of no artistic value; it is the movement of the mind between "truths" that is important. Thus in these plays we do not feel we have passed through any experience: we have known none of that organization of the impulses we call katharsis, or reconciliation. "Pooh! Pooh!" I hear the answer: "What do we want with that old-fashioned katharsis nowadays?" Well, the answer may be cogent; but if so, why go to the theatre, when we can get exactly the same thing from our own happily akathartic lives?

The justification of the form, if it needs one, as well as its name, is, I fancy, to be found in Signor Croce's "Æsthetic." Art is vision or intuition. It has not the character of conceptual knowledge, and intuition means precisely the indistinction of reality and unreality. "Ideality is the intimate virtue of art, and no sooner are reflection and judgment developed from that ideality, than art is dissipated and dies." So far good: but Signor Croce goes on to say that unity is essential,

for "a series of images which seem to be, each in turn, convincingly powerful, leaves us nevertheless deluded and disfident." Precisely! And if you are intellectually a nihilist, where in unity to come from? There appears to be no direction at all in the thought of either Herr Toller or Herr Kaiser. It is this, and not the disjunctive form of these plays, that is ruinous. You can perhaps create without a background of values, there is "The Waste Land" to prove it, but there there is a profound and ordered emotion.

New wine needs new bottles; but is it worth while to make the bottles before even the grape is ripe? For the creator, not "De la forme naît l'idée" is true, but the reverse. But, as a matter of fact, the form is not new, it is merely Shakespearean. Nor is the projection of a character's mind into actuality new—Aeschylus did it very well in the "Oresteia." But the form has one great advantage, the very one, unfortunately, which these authors do not seize—the chance of reintroducing rhetoric into the drama. Herr Toller begins to, but he is very mouthy, as is, I suppose, inevitable, if you do not believe in the importance of anything you say. "From Morn to Midnight," curiously, might almost be acted without words: a few captions would do, except in the very amusing Salvation Army scene. Herr Kaiser seems to have the better mind of the two, not vastly different, perhaps, from Wedekind's or Strindberg's, but one does not see it working enough. There are thrills, there is horror, but never the revealing phrase.

In fact, these are both plays of life approached from a bewildered intellectual angle, though Herr Toller does sometimes touch us. They are certainly not the hysterical ravings of Fritz von Unruh, whose plays are enough to discredit this school as exhibiting a "pessimism of strength." "Masses and Man" is an attempt at adjustment in a world of mass emotions and thoughts; yet I think Herr Kaiser does it better in "Gas." "From Morn to Midnight" is a kind of Faustus play, but the standard of comparison is "Peer Gynt," and this new attempt, though often entertaining, will not stand. You cannot deal directly with the symbol, and expect life to emerge from it. It is not enough to be bombarded with antitheses like Free-Unfree; Masses-Man: or be told of the Guilt of All Life, of Eternal Recurrence (chiefly of Stupidity): or be shown a vision of Man Perpetually Crucified. "Ye who govern the mighty world and its mighty concerns with the engines of eloquence—who heat it, and cool it, and melt it—and then harden it again to your purpose . . . meditate—meditate, I beseech you, upon Trim's hat."

BONAMY DOBRÉE.

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

THE "Waltz Dream," a film version of the Oscar Strauss light opera made by the German "Ufa" Film Company, was trade shown recently and will be presented at the Capitol on April 5th. This is a type of subject entirely suitable for the cinema, and the "Waltz Dream," of its kind, is perhaps the best example that has been made. The quality of the photography is very beautiful, the scenes well composed, the acting excellent: Mlle. Mary Christians as the dowdy young princess is quite charming. The story, frankly light and sentimental, is told with complete sincerity, and is amusing, lively, gay, or moving, but never boring. "Dr. Caligari," which was shown by the Film Society last Sunday, was a very remarkable film when it was first made in 1919. It was the first to strike out on non-realistic lines, and has had a strong influence on subsequent film technique. It is still, in many ways, a remarkable film: it is imaginative and ambitious, and has moments of considerable beauty, but has great weaknesses. The story often drags, repeats itself, and becomes confused, but its most serious defect is its *décor*, which tries to get its effect—occasionally, but not often, with success—by mere distortion without co-ordinated design. This becomes very tiresome, and the acting, good as it is, is not sufficiently formalized to be suitable to it.

The more "high-class" the cinema, it seems, the less the programme consists of films. At the recently opened Plaza Theatre a large proportion of it is taken up with musical interludes, singers, and dancers, of an indifferent and rather pretentious kind. These were dull, but not so dull as the film which followed them—"Cobra," with Mr. Rudolph Valentino. This is competently photographed, but its story is really idiotic and intolerably slow-moving. It was made, one supposes, purely with an eye to the Valentino "fans," for it consists solely of the spectacle of the hero's triumphant amorous progress from Italy to New York and back again. At the Tivoli Mr. Douglas Fairbanks's new film, "The Black Pirate," is a good entertainment. Hairbreadth escapes, robbery, murder, and violence of every kind, picturesque pirates, hidden treasure, a romantic and distressed princess—all the proper ingredients are so richly mixed as to make an amusing burlesque. Mr. Fairbanks captures a ship single-handed, walks the plank with impunity, skips through innumerable other adventures and extraordinary feats, and eventually, having deceived and conquered the wicked pirates, his former companions, rescues and marries the princess.

* * *

The transfer of "Mr. Pepys" to the West End has not added any touch of spontaneity to the arch humours of that very serious musical play. The cast at the Royalty is the same as that which secured some success for it at Hampstead. It includes Mr. Ranalow, Miss Isobel Jeans, Miss Florence McHugh, Mr. Guy Le Feuvre, and Mr. Laurence Baskcomb, and if these clever people were not over-produced they could make themselves much more entertaining. The habit of striking an attitude at the end of every song—and there must be twelve songs at least to each act—and waiting for applause till it comes must be trying for the actors. It is maddening to an audience which feels no impulse to applaud what is often poor matter, but out of courtesy to the actors claps hand on hand half-heartedly, once each time. If the pretentiousness which pervades the whole production is not dropped, the piece is bound to have a short life.

* * *

Last week the Marlowe Society at Cambridge performed Marlowe's "Edward II." Without subscribing to Mr. Shaw's proposal to erect a statue at Deptford to the benefactor of his kind who terminated the dramatist's career, it is hard not to feel that "Edward II." is a poor play, whatever parts of it may be as poetry. Indeed, it contains hardly a line that is bad, and hardly a scene, except the famous close, that is anything else. Probably it is fairer to picture it as a poetic pageant rather than a play; in which kings in gold and barons in steel, scene after scene clothed with all the pomp of dress and language that the theatre of the day could muster, dazzled the still simple senses of men who, by some miracle of growth, were to be listening within ten years to the broodings of Hamlet. The production was not quite up to the usual high level of the Marlowe Society, thanks, no doubt, to the ravages of 'flu: though it was partly redeemed by the fine acting of Mortimer and, still more, the King.

* * *

Following his two seasons' efforts at the Central Hall, Westminster, to popularize orchestral concerts as an aid to education, Mr. Robert Mayer extended his field of operations by inaugurating, on the 9th inst., a fresh series at Mile End. The Concert Hall at the People's Palace is large, but so great was the demand for seats that the promoter found himself forced to ballot, by schools, for admission. In opening the Concert, Dr. Malcolm Sargent adopted his usual method of attracting the attention of his youthful audience by homely explanations of the use of the various instruments forming the orchestra. From this he went on to describe the composer's aims, and illustrated, first with the use of the piano, the principal melodies of the various items by Mozart, Bach, Delibes, and Holst. With many of the best orchestral players of the day following his baton, Dr. Sargent had no difficulty in

extracting from each piece the last touch of beauty that it would yield, and to say that the children were enthusiastic in their appreciation is to use a phrase that is mild compared with the uproarious applause with which each item was received. To have the beauties of the finest music unfolded in this manner must have been a surprise to many, besides the children, and the promoter is to be congratulated on the public spirit which has induced him to bring yet another educational agency to the East End.

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Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, March 20.—David Cooper, Piano Recital, at 3, at Wigmore Hall.

Orchestral Concert for Children, at 11, at Central Hall.

Sunday, March 21.—"The Insect Play," London Labour Dramatic Federation, at the Strand.

Bishop Gore on "The Meaning of the Cross," at 5, at Indian Students' Union.

Mr. C. Delisle Burns on "The Shakespearian Drama," at 11, at South Place.

Monday, March 22.—"The Snow Man," at the Savoy.

Mr. T. C. Murray's "Autumn Fire," at Q Theatre.

"The Shoemaker's Holiday," at the Old Vic.

Professor Basil Alexeiev on "The Chinese Theatre," at 5.15, at School of Oriental Studies.

John Coates, Shakespeare's Songs Recital, at 8.15, at Chenil Galleries.

Tuesday, March 23.—"Summer Lightning," at the Comedy.

Andreev's "Katerina," at Barnes.

Presentation of the Hawthornden Prize, at 2.30, at Aeolian Hall.

Ingo Simon, Song Recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Wednesday, March 24.—"St. Joan," at the Lyceum.

"Sir Thomas More," at Crosby Hall.

Louise Marshall, Song Recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Joseph Sliwinski, Piano Recital, at 8.15, at Aeolian Hall.

Thursday, March 25.—Mr. Michael Sadleir on "Reading Back," at 8.30, at Mortimer Hall.

London Trio Concert, at 3, at Wigmore Hall.

OMICRON.

THEATRES.

ALDWYCH. Gerr. 3929. EVENINGS, at 8.15.
MATINEES, WED. & FRI., at 2.30.
A CUCKOO IN THE NEST.
TOM WALLS, YVONNE ARNAUD & RALPH LYNN.

COURT. Sloane Square. Sloane 5137 (2 lines).
NIGHTLY, at 8.15. MATS., WED., THURS., SAT., at 2.15.
THE FARMER'S WIFE
3RD YEAR AND LONDON'S LONGEST RUN.

CRITERION. 8.40. (Last weeks.) MARIE TEMPEST in
HAY FEVER.
Noel Coward's Latest Comedy. MATS., TUES., SAT., 2.30.

DRURY LANE. EVENINGS, 8.15. WED., SAT., 2.30.
ROSE MARIE. A Musical Play.
NELSON KEYS. EDITH DAY. DEREK OLDHAM.

FORTUNE. Ger. 3855. EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED., SAT., 2.30.
JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK.
By SEAN O'CASEY.

HIPPODROME, London. Ger. 650.
EVENINGS, at 8.15. MATS., WED., THURS. & SAT., at 2.30.
MERCENARY MARY.
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THE WORLD OF BOOKS

ANOTHER EMPRESS

I RECOMMEND those who have read or are reading the letters of Queen Victoria to follow them with another book just published, "Catherine the Great," by Katherine Anthony (Cape, 12s. 6d.). The philosophical historian might find many interesting things to say about the difference of character and behaviour and position between the great Russian Empress and the British Queen whose long reign was so perfectly in tune with the spirit of the nineteenth century. If one merely regarded the spirit, one would say that centuries must have divided Catherine the Great from Victoria, but, in fact, a mere forty years separated their reigns. The monarchs of the eighteenth century, who finally destroyed monarchy, are an interesting study, Louis XV., Frederick the Great, Catherine the Great, Maria Theresa, Joseph II., Marie Antoinette, but none of them is better worth reading about than Catherine. There is no lack of books dealing with her life, though most of the best of them are not in English. If for this reason alone, Miss Anthony's volume is to be welcomed. But there are other reasons in the book itself. Miss Anthony has really accomplished a very difficult task admirably. There are points at which I could easily begin to pick holes, but the merits greatly outweigh the defects. It is a serious piece of historical biography which is thoroughly interesting to read. Miss Anthony succeeds in making Catherine a very vivid and real character, she makes the story of her astonishing life extremely amusing, yet she sticks to facts and original documents, and never sacrifices history to biographical smartness.

* * *

As a person, Catherine was far the most interesting of all the eighteenth-century monarchs. Solemn histories call her a woman of genius. As to that, one may legitimately have one's doubts. It must be remembered that at Courts and on thrones a little genius, even a little intelligence, goes a very long way. Louis XVI., who managed to rule despotically over France for quite a number of years, in ordinary life would have been considered an imbecile, and if his grandfather was not actually imbecile, he contrived usually to act as if he were. That eminently middle-class Queen, Maria Theresa, for whom I have a great affection, if she had been nothing more than a rather tearful Austrian Hausfrau, would not have been remarkable for her intelligence. Marie Antoinette was a very stupid woman. Joseph II. cut quite a good figure among his fellow monarchs, and managed to do it on a second-rate mind. Even Frederick the Great, if he had not been born a Prince, would not have gone very far except in the army or the diplomatic service, in which the intellectual level has in all ages been low. Catherine, it is true, both in character and intelligence, was considerably superior to any of these monarchs. It must be remembered that she was barely of royal blood. She began life as Princess Flike of Zerbst, the daughter of an impoverished German princeling, and she thus escaped the appalling fate of being brought up as a Royal Princess in one of the great eighteenth-century Courts.

* * *

Catherine was educated more or less like a human being. She had a more than usually intelligent governess, from whom she learnt to read Molière, and also that phrase which, as Miss Anthony says, became with her a final judgment, "That is not common sense." Nothing less than common sense satisfied Catherine the Great. She was a realist, and a great realist. Her vision was limited, but in so far as she could see at all, she insisted

upon seeing things as they were and upon calling them by their right names. That was her real link with Voltaire and with Diderot. To read her letters, reminiscences, or conversation after passing through the stuffy atmosphere of the Court of Versailles or of Austria seems like opening a window in a room which had been closed for five hundred years. It is not, of course, a question only of intelligence, but also of character. Catherine had a charming character. Her gayness, her immense vitality, her enthusiasm and cynicism, her German kindness, her complete unrestraint make a fascinating combination with her ruthless realism. Looking back over the last two hundred years there is no King or Queen, Emperor or Empress, on whom one can linger with such affection and admiration as that indomitable old woman, who, though half-blind, toothless, and too unwieldy to walk, kept her gaiety and her young lovers to the end, and on the last day of her life, as usual, got up at six in the morning, drank her five cups of the strongest coffee that ever was brewed, and sat down to her three hours of writing and business.

* * *

Catherine was a realist and no Russian. But two things more must be said of her before her character and her reign can be understood. She became Russianized and an absolute despot. Russians, ever since they have emerged into history, have succeeded in combining realism with the most fantastic unreality, from the Western point of view. This complete unreality naturally affected Catherine, and, at any rate, she continually had to deal with persons whose sense of realism could not be relied on. Her relations with Potiomkin, excellently described and analyzed by Miss Anthony, illustrate this. As she points out, the French, with their limited little minds, could not understand this "big one-eyed man who sprawled on a couch all day in a bright dressing-gown, playing with a handful of unset jewels or listening to Plutarch's Lives which someone read aloud," this general of no mean ability who was terrified by the sound of big guns. And no one will understand the Turkish policy of Catherine and Potiomkin unless they realize that it was a policy half-Bismarckian and half-Chekhovian, and that no one could ever tell where the realism would end and the fantasy begin.

* * *

Secondly, Catherine was an absolute despot. The eighteenth-century Liberals believed, of course, not in democracy but in enlightened despotism, and Catherine was in many ways the ideal enlightened despot. Nevertheless, I believe that she took an active part with other eighteenth-century monarchs in digging the grave of monarchy. A change was taking place all through that century in the attitude of ordinary men towards God and the Government. There was really no place in the same world for Voltaire and Darwin on the one hand, and, on the other, for people who behaved like Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and Catherine II. of Russia. These Kings and Queens were too class-blind to do anything but accelerate the catastrophe and dig their own graves. They might have found a useful place for themselves in the new world, but they were too blind or too stupid. The follies of Marie Antoinette made Queen Victoria inevitable, and when Catherine executed Pugachev, she was also executing Nicholas II.

"Who clipped the lion's wings
And fle'd his rump and pared his claws?"

The answer is "Catherine the Great of Russia and Marie Antoinette of France."

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh, 1879-1922. 2 vols.
(Methuen, 30s.)

To those who, like the reviewer, never met Sir Walter Raleigh, he has already attained something of the proportions of a legend. One is conscious of six foot six, not of flesh, but of personality, a charming persuasive personality, whose shyness in life one would never guess from his books: a man who loved all brave and shining things, hating pomposity, cant, and mouthing rectitude, but who was still better to know than to read: a superb and winning conversationalist, a man to love and to follow. Mr. Nichol Smith, in his admirable introduction (was ever a piece of writing at once so warm and so aloof, so intimate and so detached?) perpetuates the legend. It is a good one: it is a refreshment.

A legend, because in his works alone one feels there is a certain contradiction. He appears to be protesting too much that literature is not life, that it is not to be regarded as an inviolable temple or taken as a text for sermons. Most of us will accept his premises without a qualm—we know already that sunlight itself is better than an ode to Phœbus Apollo—but in his environment literature was apt to be, not a part of life so much as a limb of that horrid monster Education. He ought never to have been a professor, though he was probably such a professor as never was; he ought to have been a skirmisher in the forefront of creative writings: "I'm sick of what is called 'the serious business of scholarship'—the baggage of the campaign. I've passed a wasted life; I ought to have written straight—on things. Now I can't acquire the art." For he was always among *les jeunes*: his supposed perversity of judgment was only being twenty years ahead of his time, but in the atmosphere of provincial Universities a healthy freedom of mind is often forced into gesticulations with a red flag. Not that Raleigh was altogether averse to this: "I love being a large tom-cat among the pigeons." At Oxford he was happier, but his loathing of education, of those who seek culture in tabloid form, did not diminish: he could not bear people "begotten by a thesis on an endowment": he disliked the Christian spirit; he could never suffer fools gladly. "The lecture," he wrote of one by W. P. Ker, "was about the best I have ever heard, full of praises of anarchy, and drink, and fighting for fighting's sake; and rightly contemptuous of higher principle, and bishops, and all the complicated nonsense of civilization."

He stood for something very good indeed, very precious, very English, in fact for that amateurish spirit which is at once the glory of English literature and its vice. It will not do in criticism, and indeed, Raleigh, condemned to be a critic, was not a literary one at all: he was an appreciator, testing literature not by life, as it should be tested, but by the personality of the author. In his essay on Matthew Arnold, for instance, he complains that Arnold talked only about Shelley's writings, and not about his person. This attitude he took irritatingly far, and in his defiant waving of the anti-pomposity flag, insisted upon referring to Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Blake as Bill; one sees it is a defensive attitude, but it errs as much as referring to them in terms of high-falutin, reverential fudge. It is a great thing to be an Englishman of the best type, yet it is also a great thing to be a European of the best type; but one cannot be both: it is no use blaming a fine ship because it is not the sea as well.

It is notorious that when the war broke out he abandoned literature, which for some time had been becoming very distasteful to him, and gave all his thoughts to the great struggle. It was perfectly consistent. What he admired and loved was the human animal; anything in books that clouded this magnificence was repellent to him. He probably used the name Klopstock as a swearword, much as Blake did: what had a man to do with Gervinus, or even Coleridge, when so much beauty was emerging from so much beastliness? He never thought war, with "the lice that breed on it," was justified by its glories, its young men "burning with a white flame"; but as the glory was there he loved it. So the offer to write the history of the Air Force was just what he wanted: besides, it was an adventure.

Adventure he loved, not because he was, as one hears said, an Elizabethan, but because he was a boy. That is just what the Elizabethans were not, and some of their most important characteristics, the sort of thing Chapman, Webster, and Donne have to give, he regarded as morbid.

For us, however, to whom the war is a nightmare, for whom the disillusion outweighs the drunkenness—for it was a drunkenness, sometimes a stupor, although the liquor was foul—it is his letters on literature and the people concerned with it that most appeal to us: that is the battle we like to see fought so briskly and courageously, as well as the fight against "culture." "Tell Mackay to stop founding Universities. There is no sense in them. Bottled men, gone putrid, that's all. And they spread like mould on cheese. If a University or two would bust up, or resolve itself into an Agapemone, my spirits would go up. Damn the education of the young, anyhow. They're too good to be fouled this way." The indictment will not stand, but it means that more Raleights are wanted: they do exist; they are even to be found in Universities: but they are hard to snare. "I am sure I was meant by providence for a backwoodsman, or a Red Indian, for I hate the town and the dissipation of one's energies by seeing far too many people."

So these vivacious letters, edited by Lady Raleigh with a tact which we must praise, but which future generations may deplore, explain and illuminate his books. They were good before; they will be better now because we shall more easily catch in them the voice of the brilliant conversationalist we did not know. The fact that this man once lived and wrote makes it easier for those living to write now. These volumes ought to be read by anyone entering upon an academic career, for they are a superb broom for cobwebs. Perhaps they will save some from being, what he knew himself to be, victims of an ugly thing which does its best, like death, to level all.

PEACOCK AS CRITIC

The Works of Thomas Love Peacock. Vol. IX.—Critical and Other Essays. Vol. X.—Dramatic Criticisms and Translations, and Other Essays. Halliford Edition. (Constable. 21s. each.)

The pleasure of reading Peacock in this delightful edition is very great, and the more we read him the better we are inclined to think him. No lover of "Crotchet Castle" and the other novels can afford to miss what is contained in these two volumes, IX. and X. For here we have Peacock's reviews and critical and dramatic essays, which appeared in the WESTMINSTER REVIEW and other magazines, as well as his unpublished writings on gastronomy and his translations. The whole of Volume IX. is of the greatest interest. The essays on Moore and Byron, on Thomas Jefferson, and on the French Comic Romances are admirable, while no one but the author of the novels could possibly have written "Gastronomy and Civilization." Volume X. is not quite as interesting and is somewhat stiff, but all the "Horæ Dramaticæ" and the account of Chapelle and Bachaumont are worth reading.

These writings of Peacock are excellent journalism, and they show that excellent journalism can be well worth reprinting a hundred years after it was written—provided that it is written by a Peacock. The Peacock of "Crotchet Castle" is continually breaking through both in the turn of the sentence and the turn of the thought. "We have added to the number of our dishes, and have forgotten how to melt butter"—nay, sentence after sentence in "Gastronomy and Civilization"—might have come out of the mouth of the great Dr. Opimian or the still greater Dr. Folliott. "The querulous egotisms, the scatulent vanity bubbling up in every page like the hundred fountains of the river Hoangho . . ." is the beginning of a typical sentence in the essay on Moore's Byron; and one gets a thrill of pleasure when, in a serious and extraordinarily able essay on Jefferson, Peacock remarks "he seems, though free from most superstitions, to have been not free from that of thinking it necessary to answer letters," or when in the same essay he writes that "Hell is paved with good intentions; but heaven forbids that any portion of the pavement should be made of the libertines of America."

MADAME DE STAËL

Madame de Staël : Her Life as Revealed in her Work, 1766-1800. By DAVID GLASS LARG. Translated from the French by VERONICA LUCAS. (Routledge. 12s. 6d.)

ALTHOUGH much well-informed work has recently been devoted to Mme. de Staël, she is often ignored, often misjudged, and treated with a contempt not wholly just. This translation of M. Larg's solid but lively study gives a clear and reasonable interpretation of Mme. de Staël which destroys most of the popular half-ideas and vague impressions about her. There may be better books about Mme. de Staël, but there could hardly be one more entertaining, more accurate, and more acute. M. Larg delights with his clear, cool intelligence, his complete freedom from crotchets, his self-control and poise, as he handles an immense mass of literary and psychological material. Before reading M. Larg I thought I knew something about Mme. de Staël; I now realize that I knew very little indeed. There are only three objections to be brought against this book. Since it only goes down to 1800, and therefore omits "Delphine," "Corinne," and "De l'Allemagne," Mme. de Staël's most important books, one might complain that only a half-portrait is given, that the publication is premature; though this first volume makes one very curious to know what the second will bring. Again, M. Larg has occasionally a tendency to patronize his subject, in itself the sign of a healthy reaction against the absurd and injudicious hero-worship of the last century. But the most serious fault is in the style. An affectation of brevity, an endeavour to compress a vast amount of material into close-packed sentences, makes the prose disagreeably short-winded and inelegant. The only excuse for critics is that they seldom write so badly as the novelists.

Germaine Necker, daughter of the Swiss banker Prime Minister who precipitated the Revolution and that Mlle. Curchod who only just escaped marrying Gibbon, was between twelve and thirteen when Voltaire and Rousseau died. And it seems as if the *manes* of those two great men had chosen the bosom of Mlle. Necker as a sort of posthumous battlefield. They did not like each other in life; Rousseau wrote to Voltaire: "Je vous hais, monsieur," and Voltaire wrote at least seventy letters to inform his friends that "Jean-Jacques est fou, mais fou à lier." Voltaire found his sanction for life in a purely intellectual activity which included almost every human interest and brought him immense fame. Rousseau, on the other hand, thought with his emotions and found his sanction in passion, which he contrived to recommend as an ally to virtuous family life. The hostility between these two points of view, the realistic and the idealistic, the intellectual and the passionate, is admirably demonstrated in the life and writings of Mlle. Necker, who became Mme. de Staël by marrying the Swedish ambassador. And the confusion was complicated owing to the fact that she was a woman. She had a good mind and enjoyed using it; and she had a Voltairean craving for the fame which superior intellectual acquirements bring, or used to bring. On the other hand, she yearned for passion and for the ideal marriage which, she held, was the summit of earthly felicity. But she was not long in discovering that the ideal marriage hardly exists, and that, in any case, domestic felicity in tranquil obscurity is hardly compatible with the fame derived from a dazzling intellectual career. At this point, Geneva triumphed over Ferney in Mme. de Staël's bosom. Instead of recognizing the dilemma, making a definite choice, and setting out to cultivate one garden or the other, she spent her life in a desperate turmoil of writing, lovers, travels, child-bearing, politics, and disappointment, always hopefully setting out to reconcile incompatible and, with her over-developed sensibility, landing herself in agonies of disillusion. But since these people of sensibility love nothing so well as a series of painful and dramatic crises, she must have enjoyed her miseries immensely.

Mme. de Staël was no ordinary sensationalist. No doubt she talked better than she wrote, and talked far too much (the only person who ever reduced her to silence was her enemy, Napoleon Bonaparte), but her books had a very wide influence on French literature. Voltaire's prying over intellectual barriers in literature was timid compared with her raids. She did even more than Chateaubriand towards

destroying the absurdly aloof snobbery of decadent French classicism. Her views and tastes were extremely unsound, but they were sincere and appealed to people emotionally. She "revealed" Italy and Germany to France, and started the romantic movement in Italy by an article on the translation of English and German authors. If "Corinne" were not so ridiculous it might have been a great book. In any case, the novel is a remarkable example of the ability of a romantic woman to idealize herself. The famous and absurd scene of Corinne's coronation with laurel on the Capitol is a pathetic revelation of Mme. de Staël's craving for notoriety and applause, and of her longing for the ideal lover—"Narbonne with a heart." On the other hand, Mme. de Staël possessed talent and, even when she appears most romantic and egotistic, she forces us to admit that she does it well. It is to her credit that Napoleon thought her important enough to persecute; and, of course, she could not pardon him for failing to carry out the ideals of her dear papa. She must be praised for her work as a kind of intellectual ambassador, introducing hitherto hostile cultures and provoking a rejuvenation of French literature. She had a genuine passion for the arts, and must have stimulated the appreciation of many thousands of people. Her Italy and her Germany are, of course, romantic unrealities; but it is a little unfair to lay the blame for Sedan upon her, as some stern French nationalists do. She cannot be so easily relieved of responsibility for the innumerable couples who have paraded their *amours* before the eyes of the cynical and unperturbed Italians. No one can refuse admiration to her generosity and courage during the Terror, when she unstintingly used her money and her position as Swedish ambassador to snatch innocent people from the guillotine. But Mme. de Staël's personality is too expansive and complex to be squeezed into the limit of a review. Those who want to know her personality in all its curious detail must read M. Larg's subtle and elaborate study.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

PIRATES

A General History of the Pirates. By Captain CHARLES JOHNSON. Edited with a Preface by PHILIP GOSSE. Vol. I. (Cayme Press. 30s.)

THE later pirates, like the later highwaymen, were dull rogues. In the careers of some of the sixteenth-century men one can trace a touch of the real spirit of adventure, even a certain grim humour. The Barbary corsairs and the Englishmen, like Mainwaring, who consorted with them, had at least a certain largeness of conception; they made war upon the world in the grand style. But the Averyes and Teachess of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century robbed in the spirit of the pickpocket, for a handful of gold to be squandered on women and rum. They had not even sense enough to realize that a modicum of virtue is essential to the success of concerted villainy; they stole from each other, and cheated each other, and betrayed each other; and their lives, in consequence, were "short, brutish, and nasty."

Captain Charles Johnson was well suited to be their chronicler. He is as businesslike as Defoe. He has not, indeed, Defoe's power of projecting character—the men, one thinks, did not greatly interest him. He has the reporter's interest in deeds that had made a noise in the world, and he records them in a dry, matter-of-fact style, with a touch of contempt for people who engaged in a silly business and made a hash of it. His book was worth reprinting; for whatever its value as a source, it gives us a true picture of eighteenth-century piracy as seen through eighteenth-century eyes.

This reprint does credit to the Cayme Press; paper, type, and lay-out are excellent, and the sparing use of red is effective. Editor and publisher have judiciously retained the eighteenth-century use of capitals and italics. Further, the volume is "adorn'd with cuts" by Alexina Ogilvie that catch the spirit of the period so admirably that it is hard to believe they are not contemporary with the narrative. The edition is limited to 500 copies, and if the second volume is as good as the first, those who possess "A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates" in its new dress, will have reason to congratulate themselves.

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ROUMANIA

A History of Roumania. By N. IORGÀ. Translated by JOSEPH McCABE. (Fisher Unwin. 10s. 6d.)

To the historian, much in the life-story of the Roumanian people still remains a fascinating mystery. Their main habitation, the narrow gap between the Carpathians and the Black Sea, has been one of the chief troughs through which the Asiatics flooded into Europe. In the first years of the second century Trajan tried to close that gap. He conquered and colonized the plains to the north of the Danube up to the present eastern confines of Bessarabia, and because of its strategic post the new province was fitted out with the best that Roman skill could provide. Yet it could not be kept. Some hundred and fifty years later Dacia was abandoned; the Romans withdrew behind the barrier of the Danube, leaving unguarded the gate through which the unbridled and withering stream of barbarian invaders was thereafter to rush in for nearly ten centuries. So destructive was their passing that practically no record remains to reveal the true story of the region during that convulsive period. But when the invading flood subsided, the Roman colony again rose to the surface, in language and in spirit, if not in law, to form an anomalous Latin island amidst the Slav world that had slowly crept up and surrounded it. How was such a revival possible? What elements of civilization had the Romans implanted, with such oracular genius for local fitness, that they should, in a short span of time, take roots deep enough to survive all those cataclysmic centuries and later to bloom afresh as true to type as ever? And of what nature were the influences that produced such a perplexing renaissance? There is room here for a piece of historic writing as entrancing as any fairy tale.

After Xenopol, Professor Iorga has done most to unearth the sources for a history of the Roumanian people. He is constantly bringing to light new material with a flair which borders on the uncanny; and his hypotheses and theses often are touched with the mark of genius. If he could for a while take leave of this restless search and of his many other activities, he might give us a history of the Roumanian people that should remain a classic. There is much erudition and brilliant synthesis in the present work, as in all that Professor Iorga writes, yet it does not give us that general history of the Roumanian people which we need in the English language. A good half of the book is taken up with such abundant details on the perennial fighting in the more distant times that it is likely to bewilder the general reader without teaching him much about the life and ways of the people. Occasionally, instructive sidelights might be extracted even from those military episodes. Recently the strategy and tactics of Stephen the Great have been examined by General Radu Rosetti in a series of able papers (read before the Roumanian Academy) which, from that angle, have thrown fresh light on some of the economic problems of the old Roumanian provinces, as well as on certain characteristics of their social organization. But, generally speaking, what we need is a book which should, with planned irreverence, neglect the princes, however brilliant their exploits in arms, and bring us nearer the rich life of that much-tried people; a book which should culminate not like the present in a chronological table of the three hundred princes or so who have ruled over the Roumanian provinces, but rather in a list of the evolutionary milestones from which we could get a clear picture of the social and national development of the Roumanian people. The publishers would have been better advised to choose for translation (perhaps in an abridged edition) Professor Iorga's "Geschichte des Rumänischen Volkes im Rahmen seiner Staatsbildung," which contains considerably more information on the progress of the Roumanian populations through modern times than does the present work.

Of course, Professor Iorga is always worth reading, and his translator has served him well. There are few mistakes. Some have been taken over from the original French edition, like the statement on page 4 that southern Transylvania really belongs to Wallachia, where the sources of its rivers are, when what is meant is that the sources of Wallachia's rivers are in southern Transylvania. Other mistakes are the translator's own: on page 258 he makes M. Iorga say that among the Roumanians who favoured Germany in the

last war were a "few personal friends of Russia," where M. Iorga had written "few personal enemies." The student might also be warned that some of the items ("Aus dem Leben König Karls," &c.) are printed in the Bibliography in a way which may possibly cause them to be taken for works of M. Iorga's, whereas they are original sources.

PARNELL

The Parnell of Real Life. By WILLIAM O'BRIEN. (Fisher Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

"MY Dear O'Brien," remarked Parnell on a certain occasion, "you are not a newspaper man. You are Don Quixote." Gallantry of spirit has kept Mr. O'Brien young and, in the decline of the Irish parliamentary movement, saved him from the disillusion of those who were unwilling to resign power to an ungrateful younger generation. Apart from the necessary prejudices of all public men, a clear dash of idealism has kept him from mere rancour. The legend of Parnell increases, as Mr. Augustine Birrell pointed out in a recent issue of THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, while interest in contemporary Ireland fades. Mr. William O'Brien, in his brave attempt to give us the Parnell of real life, is handicapped in double fashion. By the nature of things, the more an historical personage is explained, the more the mystery deepens, and choice among the masses of conflicting opinions becomes bewildering. Add to this the fact that Mr. O'Brien is himself an historic figure and, to a younger generation, is in the perilous process of becoming a legend; for great days have been his companions. Looking back, he brings us, in that fine ponderous style of his, so much of the past, so rounded and mellow in its periods that the efficient prose of our hurried day appears in contrast mean and brittle—memories and rumour of old battle, great nights of parliamentary division, thronged lobbies, heads bent in whispered council and lifted to speech, so many emotions of triumph become failure in the grasp, that the figure of Parnell, clear and defined in anecdotal passages, recedes once more into the obscurity of legend. But the mingling of epic and personal impressions, the crucial details which Mr. O'Brien reveals for the first time, give the book both value and delight.

Hereditary influences are discounted nowadays, but, as Mr. O'Brien rightly insists, the fact that Parnell was descended from a New England "Ironside" who had fought with Washington, and from an English family long planted in Wicklow, sufficiently explains his calm demeanour—which would not be of remarkable interest but for the conventional belief in Celtic excitability. Inherited sympathy with rebellion on both sides gave Parnell a readiness, that seems inconsistent at a first glance with his logical caution, to adopt, if practicable, "unconstitutional" methods. Mr. O'Brien tells how, in Fenian days, Parnell actually met a Russian delegate, when war was threatened in the East, and many thousand Irish veterans of the American Civil War, led by General Phil Sheridan of Shenandoah fame, were concentrating in the Atlantic ports, with the hope of startling Gladstone into action.

Romance has added much to the sentimental legend of Parnell, but Mr. O'Brien, in his brief discussion of the divorce case, verifies the realistic view in Irish popular tradition by quoting a private and unique letter. When the suit was pending Parnell wrote to him:—

"If this case is ever fully gone into (a matter which is exceedingly doubtful) you may rest assured that the dis-honour and the discredit have not been on my side."

The confession, made long after, by the genial Sir Frank Lockwood, who was counsel for Mrs. O'Shea, confirms this:—

"Parnell was cruelly wronged all round. I am not altogether without remorse myself."

Mr. O'Brien departs from his own wisdom in devoting many pages to a ruthless criticism of Mr. St. John Ervine's popular dramatization of the Parnell legend. Apart from the historical absurdity of Mr. Ervine's book, the sight of Mr. Ervine, beating his little drum and bravely flaunting his orange sash, yet drawn by the fascination of an old imaginative culture towards the South, is not another Irish paradox but another proof that Partition is a foundling of the politicians.

THE BANKER

A Remarkable Article by Mr. J. M. KEYNES

The March issue of *The Banker* contains a brilliant character study of Walter Bagehot by Mr. J. M. Keynes. This article contains much original and forcible criticism of the Bank of England and it should be read by everyone interested in economics and politics.

Other Contents Include :

The British Gold Standard in Action. By H. J. POUYANNE, Financial Attaché to the French Embassy, London.

The Hungarian Bank Note Forgeries. By EDUARD BENES, Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Lloyd George's Observations on English Banking Methods.

Old Socialism and New. By the Right Hon WILLIAM GRAHAM, M.P., Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons ; formerly Financial Secretary to the Treasury. (This article is an important contribution to modern political thought ; Mr. Graham exposes the inadequacies of the old Socialist creed based on Marxian principles and he shows how the Liberal and Conservative parties are gradually accepting many principles formulated by the Socialist Party.)

These are but a few of the many features of "*The Banker*." As there is an unprecedented demand for this journal, readers are advised to apply for copies without delay.

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THE AMERICAN ICARUS

Winged Defence. By Colonel WILLIAM MITCHELL. (Putnam.)

THE author of this book has recently been the central figure in a highly sensational trial. His career, both during the war and before it, was a very distinguished one; and during the reconstruction period which followed the armistice, he was prominent in a number of technical controversies between the high commands of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Service. In the numerous discussions which centred round certain experimental tests of air power—undertaken largely at President Coolidge's instigation—Colonel Mitchell maintained that an air force should be treated as a separate military arm equal in status to the army or the navy, and that the Government of the United States should set up the necessary machinery for making it so. Unfortunately Colonel Mitchell found it difficult to prove his point without abusing those in authority over him. Every time a bombing experiment took place, journalists and reporters thronged round his office for copy, which the Colonel was never slow to give them; and in the course of time he was brought before a court-martial for breach of discipline. By then Colonel Mitchell's indiscretions had become a major political issue. Vast constitutional issues were raised at the trial: the first plea of the defence was that the obligations of a citizen of the United States superseded the subordinate obligations imposed by membership in a military corporation, in the same way that the law of God supersedes the law of man, when a conflict exists between the two. When that failed the defence pleaded intrinsic justification, and said that they wished to examine the entire military organization of the country, item by item, to prove that Colonel Mitchell had spoken the truth. The trial took a long time; but it is surprising that it did not take very much longer.

To those who know the circumstances in which the book was written, "Winged Defence" comes as a pleasant surprise. Colonel Mitchell writes with the unbending conviction of a pioneer; he has no doubt that we are on the dawn of a new period; that the aeronautical era will be as important in the world's history as the age of stone or the age of bronze; but he states his case impersonally and courteously, and attacks nobody. This is not the place to discuss the technical issues that he raises: it is enough to say that we believe his main contentions to be unsound. A single quotation will suffice to show that the man's mind is incapable of grasping the intricacies of military problems, and that he writes with the dogmatism of a wild enthusiast. "In the case of an insular power, or continental power . . . it is difficult to see how such a country could be invaded by hostile land forces, or how a surface navy could compromise the country's independence. This is so because air forces can destroy any surface ships that approach the coast of a nation." The whole book is written on this note.

Although we disagree entirely with Colonel Mitchell's arguments and statements, we do not hesitate to recommend his book both to technical and non-technical readers. We do not measure a country's civilization by its facilities in the matter of lateral and vertical transport; but we find a certain fascination in the views of a man who does. "It is not uncommon for me," writes the Colonel, "to have my breakfast in Washington, my lunch in Dayton, and my dinner in Chicago, Detroit, or Milwaukee." The sentence rings with aristocratic pride. It is, on this kind of achievement, one feels, that the governing classes of the new age will base their claim to control the retrograde masses who (like ourselves) prefer to eat all their meals in one place; but Colonel Mitchell's implied assumption causes us no irritation. Quite the contrary: we should like to talk to him philosophically about the aeronautical era and its incomparable superiority over all preceding periods in human history; to provoke him to fresh bursts of enthusiasm by expressing a simulated admiration for the Roman Empire and the feudal system.

The total impression left by the book is one of regret that the writer should have damaged his professional career by failing to realize that intemperate speech persuades nobody worth persuading, and benefits no one except the organizers of a Press campaign. Had he spoken as he has written, the United States army would not have been deprived of the services of a brave and dauntless enthusiast. Time will doubtless confound his views: we hope none the less that it will promote his sales.

THE RUHR AND LORRAINE

The Ruhr-Lorraine Industrial Problem. By GUY GREER. (Allen & Unwin. 8s. 6d.)

THE Carnegie Institute of Economics was established a year or two ago "with the object of ascertaining the facts about certain economic problems, and of interpreting them in the most simple and understandable form." Of the dozen or so volumes which it has issued, about half deal with "international economic reconstruction," and Mr. Greer's book is the last of the series.

As an exposition to the ignorant the book is excellent. It contains no very remarkable contribution towards the solution of the problem with which it deals, but, after all, that is not its object. Given the interdependence of coal and iron ore, and a frontier between the districts where they are found, the need for co-operation between the two countries which possess them is self-evident. Still, it is all to the good that the whole case should be stated for the benefit of a public unaccustomed to draw its own conclusions.

Mr. Greer describes the pre-war economic organization of the Ruhr-Lorraine districts, the alterations made by the Peace Treaty, the subsequent history of the region, and its present condition. He examines the problem with great impartiality from the French and German points of view, and then from that of the reconstruction of Europe as a whole; and to make his plea for Franco-German co-operation more convincing, puts up and knocks down the alternatives: an attempt by the two countries to make themselves independent of each other, and political coercion of Germany by France.

Mr. Greer's view of the functions of the Reparation Commission is an original one. He was attached to it as an expert, so he ought to know; but one is not accustomed to regard that body as being primarily intended to regulate the movement of coal between the countries of Europe with a view to the speediest possible restoration of industry to normal conditions. Surely the first object of the Reparation Commission was to obtain reparations. No doubt the experts did what they could to use their power in the best interests of reconstruction—until the politicians became too strong for them; but the Commission was first created for a political purpose.

That is why one cannot agree with Mr. Greer's suggestion that the coal clauses of the Peace Treaty can be made the foundation of the new economic *entente* which he wishes to see between France and Germany, or that the Reparation Commission can pave the way for it. Even granted, as he maintains, that the Treaty arrangement was economically sound, it cannot be dissociated from the punitive settlement of which it forms part. Mr. Greer gets out of the Reparation problem too easily by imagining that the provisions of Versailles can gradually merge into a system of free co-operation. Reparations must be either one thing or the other; and in the minds of both French and Germans they are most emphatically the other.

The idea of an international commission to supervise an agreement in its early stages, however, is a useful one. It is the sort of work which might well be undertaken by the Economic Commission of the League. It will be a long time before the complete economic *entente* which Mr. Greer hopes for can be realized. Meantime, he has done a good service in explaining the need for it so simply and clearly.

ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

"MARY DOBSON," by Una M. Saunders (A. & C. Black, 6s.), is a biography of the daughter of Austin Dobson; she was a musician, a writer, and a missionary. "Regency Ladies," by Lewis Melville (Hutchinson, 21s.), contains biographical essays on Queen Charlotte, Lady Sarah Lennox, Miss Burney, Harriette Wilson, and others; it is illustrated.

The following are some travel books: "The Fight of the 'Firecrest,'" (Witherby, 8s. 6d.), which describes a single-handed cruise in a 39-foot cutter across the Atlantic; "Slaves and Ivory," by Major Henry Darley (Witherby, 12s. 6d.), the record of travel and exploration in the Upper Sudan on the Abyssinian frontier; "Easter in Palestine, 1921-1922," by Dame Millicent Fawcett (Fisher Unwin, 9s.).

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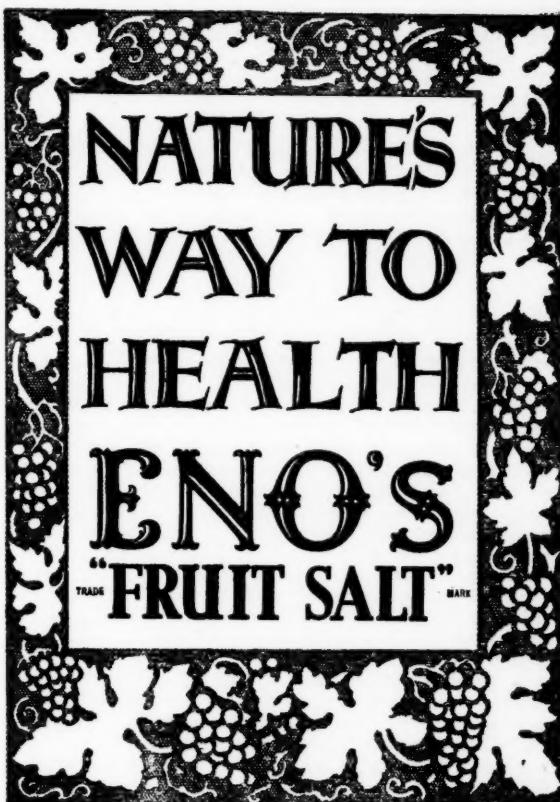
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Some books on classical subjects are: "The Odes of Horace," done into English verse, by Hugh Macnaghten, Vice-Provost of Eton College (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.); "Greek Pottery," by Charles Dugas, translated from the French by W. A. Thorpe (A. & C. Black, 3s. 6d.); "Ovid and his Influence," by Edward Kennard Rand (Harrap, 5s.), in "Our Debt to Greece and Rome" Series.

"The Charm of Indian Art," by W. E. Gladstone Solomon (Fisher Unwin, 10s. 6d.), consists of essays on the past, present and future of Indian art.

"Syria," by Leonard Stein (Benn, 3s. 6d.) is an interesting account of the course of events in Syria since 1918.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Reminiscences of Mrs. Comyns Carr. Edited by EVE ADAM. (Hutchinson, 21s.)

Mrs. Comyns Carr was born in 1850, and thus lived through that curious age when Bohemia, to which she was proud to belong, was beginning, thanks to Lady Lindsay, Lady Lewis, and Lady Jeune, and others, to be admitted to society. But Mrs. Comyns Carr did not particularly enjoy admittance, as her sketch of Mrs. Wemyss' grim entertainment bears witness. She dabbled in the Princes and the beauties, the Oscar Wildes, Mrs. Langtrys, and Prince of Waleses; but with charming spontaneity preferred her own circle, where the men wore peg-top trousers, and the women, following her own leadership, refused to be cumbered with bustles and crinolines. This lively and unembarrassed spirit is perceptible throughout her book. She drew all the writers and painters—Burne-Jones, Sargent, Meredith, Henry James—to her circle, though in her early days the bed had to be made up to look the part of dinner table. Eventually she became dress designer to Ellen Terry, thanks to a happy experiment of hers with a muslin frock and a potato steamer. For some years she was always behind the scenes or sitting with the sarcastic and formidable Irving in the stage box, or awaiting in fear the non-arrival of Ellen Terry. She would dash in two minutes before her call and explain airily that she had been to the Minories to see if a begging letter writer were telling the truth. Irving himself never dared to upbraid her. Off she dashed, draped in Mrs. Carr's wondrous gowns of Bohemian silk and beetles' wings. But the charm of the book does not come from its good stories; it comes from the sense it gives that, however grim and gaunt the stock Victorian figures may have been, another life washed at their feet—a life of good fellowship, good eating, merriment, hard work, and ladies, if the portraits are to be trusted, of exquisite grace and charm.

* * *

The Days of Dickens. By ARTHUR L. HAYWARD. (Routledge, 15s.)

This very sprightly and entertaining book collects a mass of information about the early and middle years of Victorian life which certainly bears out the publishers' statement that "the days of Dickens and Thackeray seem almost as remote as the days of the Stuarts." One feeling dominates the reader—a sense of escape. For whatever charges may be brought against the present, we could scarcely tolerate one day lived as our great-grandfathers lived it. Consider travel. Early one March morning two of the outside passengers on the Bath Mail were found frozen to death, while a third expired soon afterwards. This was only an exaggeration of the miseries ordinarily suffered in cold weather by the outside fares. "Postboys were frequently lifted out of their saddles at the point of death." Or consider sanitation. The drainage of London until 1860 was based on legislation and plans dating from the reigns of Henry VIII. and William and Mary. The River Thames was in so disgusting a state that Members of Parliament could hardly bear the smell in the House of Commons. Seven miles of the river in July, 1858 were reported to be in a state of "putrid fermentation." In factories children were harnessed to trucks like dogs, and scrambled along on all fours. Little boys were driven up chimneys or shoved down head first. As lately as February, 1864, five pirates were hung in a row outside Newgate. It is true that the splendours of the aristocracy were more solid than they are now, the country more profoundly rural, the mail coaches picturesque, and genius, at least in art and science, prolific. But if the reader wishes to heighten the relish of his own hot baths and electric light, he cannot do better than study "The Days of Dickens"—a book, moreover, stuffed with odds and ends of amusing information.

Love's Bitter-Sweet: Translations from the Irish Poets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. By ROBIN FLOWER. (The Cuala Press, 10s. 6d.)

Gaelic poetry, being the production of a professional and highly privileged caste, attained a perfection of technique and detailed skill, akin to that of Celtic illumination and metal work. The existence, however, of a school of aristocratic poets, preoccupied with questions of beauty, wit, and the *amour courtois* to be found in Jacobean and Cavalier lyrics, has until recently been known only to scholars. In Ireland, Gerald the Earl, the Earl of Glencare, the well-known Pierce Ferriter; in Scotland, the Earl and Countess of Argyle, Duncan Campbell, and others, dallied with those sweet metaphysics, and "the matter of European love poetry met the manner of Gaelic tradition." Mr. Flower states in his preface that he has adopted "the lyric manner of the European tradition, for the peculiar effect of the Irish manner with its interlacing rhymes and concise and balanced phrasing cannot be reproduced in any English which may hope to give the effect of poetry." Too many echoes of English verse occur in his versions: idiom is lost: Dian Céacht, the Irish divinity of healing, becomes Apollo, the plain "land from which came" appears as "lands that hear the Siren," "sweet-worded Mór of the red mouth," is reduced vaguely to a "sweet singer," and so forth. But despite this reconversion, the distinct quality of thought and mood, in his best versions, sufficiently appears.

* * *

Three Predatory Women. By SYDNEY LOCH. (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

Mr. Loch's book is made up of three stories, each dealing with a woman who seeks her prey and loses it. It would seem that the writer is less interested in the psychology of sex than in the spectacle of man grappling with the giant obstacles of nature and what we are pleased to call civilization, for somehow one forgets about his *Patricias* and *Sallys*, and prefers to remember the fears of the man lost in the Australian bush or the toiling, cursing seamen on the storm-swept barque. There Mr. Loch's work is strong and unaffected, and the dwarfish efforts of man shine out with some glory amid the confusion and menace of nature. The best story is that whose scene is largely laid in Poland during winters of famine and typhus. Its hero, the world-famous Jewish tenor who kept his soul in spite of his wife's cold assault upon it, is a wonderful figure of simplicity and half-articulate poetry, and the story of his life is drawn on the grand scale. The tragedy of his idealism is the highest point reached in a book which is altogether uncommon and often noble.

* * *

Successful Advertising. By PHILIP SMITH. (Smith's Advertising Agency, 10s. 6d.)

This is a very useful book for the advertiser. It deals first with the general principles of advertising, e.g., the selection of a name, price, distribution, and with the various methods. Then there is a section on "making advertising space worth its price." Finally there is a mass of useful information regarding typography, size of types and paper, the Press, &c.

* * *

The Plurred Years. By VIOLET HUNT. (Hurst & Blackett, 18s.)

Many people, of course, will complain that Miss Hunt has outraged decency by speaking so frankly of people still alive, and by revealing so poignantly the sorrows of her own heart. But after all, the hardened reader of memoirs is so well supplied with books stuffed with horsehair that he can hardly help welcoming one made out of the tenderer material of flesh and blood. It is true that blood is a messy liquid; tempers are bound to be ruffled and dignities smeared by writers who dabble their fingers in it. Yet, for all its frankness, Miss Hunt's story is by no means plain sailing. Exactly what happened, and why what happened did so happen, we confess to being still in doubt. "Like Miss Flite I have haunted for years the law courts of this as well as those of other countries," says Miss Hunt, and she takes it for granted that the reader is as well versed in legal judgments as she is. It does not very much matter. The book is a novelist's book, and situations are presented as they appear imaginatively, not as they happen prosaically and accurately day by day. Through the glamour and the sordidness (both are well mixed) loom up several of the great Edwardian figures with uncommon brilliancy—Conrad, Hudson, and in particular Henry James. Whether his letters to Miss Hunt have already been published we know not; they are highly and exquisitely characteristic of the

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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A Specimen Copy of "THE NATION and THE ATHENÆUM" will be sent to any address on application to the Publisher.

unofficial side—the timid, prudish, spinsterly side of that great novelist. Unpleasantness and brilliance are oddly mixed throughout the book, for Miss Hunt has lived her flurried years in the purleus of letters, and, as we all know, the precincts of genius (but she runs the word to death) are apt to be unsavoury.

NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

ORCHESTRAL

BERLIOZ: "Symphonie Fantastique." Op. 14. London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Felix Weingartner. (Columbia. Six 12 in. records. L1708 to 1713. 6s. 6d. each.)

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: "Scheherazade." Parts I. and II. (Polydor. Three 12 in. records. 66067 to 66069. 5s. 9d. each.)

ROSSINI: Overture to "Semiramide." B.B.C. Wireless Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Percy Pitt. (Columbia. 12 in record. 4s. 6d.)

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE: Britannia Overture. New Queen's Hall Light Orchestra, conducted by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. (Columbia. 12 in. record. 6s. 6d.)

The "Symphonie Fantastique," quite apart from its merits as music, has a historical interest, for it is almost the beginning of programme music. It has been recorded for the gramophone before, but this Columbia version, on new process records, is to be welcomed. Weingartner and the London Symphony Orchestra give it every chance, and the recording is on the whole extremely satisfactory. "Visions and Passions," which occupies the first record and the first side of the second record, is perhaps not quite so good as what follows. In the passages where the strings are playing alone or with the wood-wind, the effect is excellent, but there is a tendency to shrillness and, where brass, wood-wind, and strings are heard together, the balance is sometimes lost. "A Ball" (side 4 and side 5) could hardly be better; particularly good are the valve at the beginning and the exhilarating passage towards the end. "Scenes in the Country" occupies side 6 on the third record, the whole of the fourth record, and side 7 on the fifth record. The playing and recording of the wood-wind, especially the passages for the cor anglais and oboe at the beginning and the famous passage for the cor anglais at the end, are remarkable, and the more elaborate passage on side 7 is also excellent. "The March to the Gallows," side 10, and "The Dream of a Witches' Sabbath," which occupies the whole of the sixth record, are most impressive, the climax being a real climax, and yet the various instruments being clearly heard.

It is to be hoped that the Polydor will go on and give us the other two movements of "Scheherazade," thus completing a work which, we believe, has not yet been fully recorded. It is a work which offers considerable difficulties to the recorder, and the first two movements, as here recorded, are not perfect. They are, however, well worth listening to. The playing of the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Dirk Fock, is good. The recording is somewhat uneven. At times it is extremely good, particularly in the second movement, where the passages for wood-wind and the important passage for muted trombone and trumpet are notable. Some of the first movement is a little muddy, and in places the 'cellos and basses do not get their due.

Rossini's Overture to "Semiramide" is a triumph of recording. There is some pleasant, very light music mixed up with some tremendous noise, but for clearness of reproduction this record would be hard to beat. The "Britannia" record is not quite so successful, though again the recording is good. Mackenzie's music does not appeal to us, though he has produced a cheery piece in which hornpipe and "Rule Britannia" play a considerable part.

MISCELLANEOUS

WEMBLEY MILITARY TATTOO. (Columbia. Two 12 in. records. 9073 and 9074. 4s. 6d. each.)

These records can be recommended to those who like military bands, "Tommy Atkins," "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and "Tipperary."

MOTORING NOTES

THE agitation aroused by the proposed raid on the Road Fund seems to have led motorists to ignore another important matter within the Government's jurisdiction, namely, that of rubber restriction. There have been many angry comments on the recent increases in the price of tyres, but it has to be remembered that this is due almost entirely to the policy of the Colonial Office.

It was decided in September last to release 10 per cent. of the rubber produced in restricted areas. There were many people who held that this would be grossly inadequate to meet market demands, and this is being substantiated by subsequent events.

The Colonial Secretary maintained that the system of rubber restriction would right itself in twelve months. Five months have passed, but his prediction does not appear to be reaching fulfilment. The price of rubber has increased very, very rapidly; and when one remembers the Colonial Secretary's admission last September that the price of rubber was then abnormal, it is impossible to treat his prediction seriously.

The figures of rubber prices since the Stevenson Restriction Scheme came into operation, three and a half years ago, are illuminating. When the scheme was first put into operation rubber was 6d. per lb., admittedly an unremunerative price. During the early part of 1924 it averaged 1s. per lb., whilst in the first six months of 1925 it had risen to 2s. per lb. Now it is 3s. 8d. per lb., fully 8d. per lb. over the average price of 1925.

Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that tyre manufacturers find it necessary to increase their prices?

It has to be admitted, on the other hand, that the rubber planter was facing almost insuperable difficulties in 1921. It is estimated that he was selling rubber at a loss of 2½d. per lb., so that 9d. per lb. would have been an economic price. The gap between 9d. and 3s. 8d. is unbridgeable, however—and motorists would be well advised to watch the policy of the Colonial Office very keenly. Their restrictive policy constitutes an intolerable burden on the motoring community.

* * * * *

Writing on tyres reminds me of the Tyre Insurance Policy issued by the Lancashire and General Assurance Co., Ltd. This novel policy is issued against tyre bursts or blow-outs, but is only applicable to new British tyres. The motorist, when buying a new tyre can insure it by acquiring a coupon, for which he pays at the rate of 6d. per £1 or part of £ value. This coupon covers tyre risks for a period of twelve months, and enables a motorist to secure a new tyre or tube anywhere in Great Britain should accident befall him. The policy is certainly a novel one, and is to be commended to all motorists.

* * * * *

I had been reading the account of the Hon. Victor A. Bruce's trip from John o' Groats to Monte Carlo with a six cylinder A.C., prior to the International Monte Carlo Rally of 1926, when I was asked if I would take one down to Tunbridge Wells late at night. It was a race against time, but it was a most enjoyable trip. In the congested streets beyond London Bridge it responded to the controls with an ease that compelled one's wholehearted admiration. Beyond Bromley it raced along smoothly and joyously as though endeavouring to catch the powerful rays from the headlights; and though there were pedestrians and cyclists in profusion, one was able to steer clear or to draw to a standstill with ample time and margin.

The engine ran with silken smoothness, acceleration was all that could be desired, whilst the springing and upholstery made one at ease. As I rode along I was irresistibly reminded of Browning's "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," and the lines:—

"Speed" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest.
And into the midnight we galloped abreast."

Rushing along through avenues of trees, I felt the same sense of exhilaration as did those riders.

* * * * *

Motor engineers are realizing the importance of the feminine appeal in their productions. Elegant coachwork, neat fittings and accessories, saloon bodies, and a hundred and one refinements are being embodied to attract Mistress Eve. It is to be hoped that manufacturers will not jeopardize their more solid achievements for ephemeral appeals of this sort, for the tendency to choose a car because of its coachwork or some neat accessory may cause serious disappointment to such purchasers, with disastrous results to the manufacturer. The life and service of a car depend upon something more than accessories.

THE MAN IN THE CAR.

TOURS, WHERE TO STAY, &c.

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KINGSLEY HOTEL, near the British Museum, Hart Street, Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1. Large and well-appointed Temperance Hotel. Perfect sanitation; fireproof floors. Bedroom, breakfast, and attendance, from 8s. 6d. per night. Full tariff on application. Telegrams: "Bookcraft, London." Telephone: Museum 1232 (2 lines).

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EDUCATIONAL.

PINEHURST, CROWBOROUGH, SUSSEX.—High ground on edge of moorland. Girls 9–19. Principal: Helen T. Neild, M.A. (Manchester), Class. Trip. (Camb.).

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Principal: Miss STANSFIELD
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ST. MICHAEL'S, BOGNOR.
 WOODARD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS. Fees £150.
 Apply Miss B. A. WARD, B.Sc., Lady Warden.

L'INSTITUT MONNIER, Boarding School, at Versoix, near Geneva, combines education and instruction with home life.

STRAMONGATE SCHOOL, KENDAL.

SCHOLARSHIPS.

THE BRYAN LANCASTER TRUSTEES and the Headmaster offer a SCHOLARSHIP of £30 a year for four years, from September next.

Candidates must be under 12 years old on July 31st, 1926, and application must be made before March 27th to the Headmaster, who will forward full particulars, and entrance forms on request.

The Examination will be held on Saturday, April 10th.

CATERHAM SCHOOL (SURREY).

Head Master: Mr. ALLAN P. MOTTRAM, B.Sc.
 For details of Fees, Entrance Scholarships, &c., apply to the School Secretary, 31, Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.4.

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 in aid of the French Hospital and Dispensary, London.

THOS. AGNEW AND SONS' GALLERIES,
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 Closes April 1st.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF MIDDLESBROUGH.

PUBLIC LIBRARY.

A SENIOR ASSISTANT (Male) is required at a commencing salary of £175 per annum, to take charge of the Lending Libraries (Brown's Classification). Applicants must hold certificates in Classification and Cataloguing.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, together with copies of not more than three testimonials must be delivered to the undersigned not later than Saturday, April 3rd, 1926.

Canvassing will be a disqualification.

PRESTON KITCHEN,
 Town Clerk.
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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN.

VACANCY FOR A LECTURER IN GERMAN.

APPICATIONS are invited for the above post on the following conditions:

SALARY £400 per annum, rising by annual increments of £25 to £500.

ENGAGEMENT in the first instance for three years, subject to 6 months' notice on either side.

DUTY to be assumed on August 1st, 1926, or as soon as possible thereafter.

TRANSPORT. A sum not exceeding £40 will be given to the successful candidate towards transport expenses, subject to a proportionate refund in the event of termination of the engagement before the expiry of three years.

Applications, with copies of testimonials, all in duplicate, should reach the Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C.2, not later than April 7th, 1926.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—The Senate invite applications for the University Readership in English tenable at Westfield College. The appointment is open to men and women equally. Salary £500 a year (£400, if resident in the College). Applications (12 copies) must be received not later than first post on April 15th, 1926, by the Academic Registrar, University of London, South Kensington, London, S.W.7, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—The Senate invite applications for the Sir Ernest Cassel Lectureship in Commerce tenable at the London School of Economics. Salary £450 rising to £550 a year. Applications (12 copies) must be received not later than first post on April 16th, 1926, by the Academic Registrar, University of London, South Kensington, London, S.W.7, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

THE UNIVERSITY will shortly proceed to award two University Post-graduate Travelling Studentships, each of the value of £275 for one year, and three Post-graduate Studentships of the value of £150. The Studentships are open to both Internal and External graduates of the University. Applications (on a prescribed form) must reach the Principal Officer, University of London, South Kensington, S.W.7 (from whom further particulars can be obtained), not later than May 1st, 1926.

SCOTCH WOMAN GRADUATE of long and varied experience wants, in or near London, really interesting post of administrative and organising type or travelling secretaryship (business or personal) abroad. Fully trained, accustomed to responsibility. Present salary £500; age 37.—Reply to Box No. 957, THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, 38, Gt. James-street, W.C.1.

DOCTOR requires half-time Secretary (afternoons), April 5th. Salary £100. Knowledge of Pitman Shorthand essential.—Write Box 953, THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, 38, Gt. James-street, Holborn, W.C.1.

EXAMINATIONS.

THE SOCIETY OF INCORPORATED ACCOUNTANTS
 AND AUDITORS.

(A.D. 1885)

EXAMINATIONS.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the next Examination of candidates resident in England and Wales will be held in London, Manchester, Cardiff, and Leeds, on the following dates:—

Preliminary Examination on May 3rd and 4th.

Intermediate " May 5th and 6th.

Final " May 4th, 5th and 6th.

Candidates desirous of presenting themselves must give notice to the undersigned on or before March 25th, 1926.

Women are eligible under the Society's regulations to qualify as Incorporated Accountants upon the same terms and conditions as are applicable to men.

By Order of the Council.

A. A. GARRETT,
 Secretary.

50, Gresham Street,
 London, E.C.2.



FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BELGIAN FRANCS—RATES OF INTEREST—BRITISH SNIA—AN ACROSTIC IN STOCKS.

BUSINESS on the Stock Exchange has dwindled to small proportions for the reasons that we gave last week—industrial troubles, a slump in francs, and a batch of new issues. The slump in francs shifted from Paris to Brussels, and the sensational Press seems once again to have missed the real cause, though it might well have made some capital out of the hidden hand of the international bankers. Everyone knows that negotiations have been in progress for some time for the raising of an international loan for Belgium for the stabilization of the franc. The bankers required various guarantees. As a first step they required the balancing of the Budget, which has been accomplished. They then required specific securities, and one of them was the railways. The Belgian correspondent of the TIMES reported that the Railwaymen's Union threatened a general railway strike if the working of the railways under a separate organization resulted in a single dismissal. The Belgian Government has, therefore, been trying to avoid the pledging of the railways. The international bankers were adamant. The foreign credits with which the Belgian franc had been maintained at a steady level since October were suddenly withdrawn, and the franc fell headlong. The vulgar Press could not invent a better story of the power of international money. It seems certain that unless Belgium gives the bankers the security they want, she will get no loan.

* * *

The batch of new issues is already upon us. Two loans under the Trades Facilities Act and several commercial issues made their appearance this week. The pace of issues this year has been fast and furious. For the two months ending February 28th the total at £54,476,000 is 54 per cent. greater than the total for the corresponding period of 1925.

DISTRIBUTION OF NEW CAPITAL ISSUES.
(FIGURES OF THE MIDLAND BANK.)

	United Kingdom.	India & Ceylon.	British Possessions.	Foreign Countries.	Total.
Year 1925	£ 132,096	£ 3,496	£ 53,978	£ 30,394	£ 219,897
Jan., 1926	9,474	44	8,888	9,961	28,367
Feb., 1926	22,307	53	1,608	2,141	26,109
Two months	31,781	97	10,496	12,102	54,476
	*	*	*	*	*

A firm of London stockbrokers does well to remind its clients that the heavy demands for capital, present and potential, will admit of no decline in interest rates this year or next. On all sides, European, Colonial and domestic, the demands for capital are increasingly heavy. In Europe, it is remarked that the inducement held out to debtor nations that loans may follow the settlement of war debts, puts a heavy potential claim upon the London money market. For example, a good deal of the industrial expansion that is going on in Italy will be financed in London and New York. It is worth notice that German municipality and Italian utility concerns have had to pay over 7½ per cent. in the New York market. The recent issue of 7 per cent. Gold Bonds of the Italian Public Utility Credit Institute gave a yield to the New York investor of £7 14s., or £7 16s. 3d. per cent. with redemption, while the German Consolidated Municipal Loan of the German Savings Banks and Clearing Association gave a yield of 7½ per cent. Apart from German and Italian demands, there are the Belgian loan, the birth of which seems so painful, and the Rumanian loan, which will be equally painful, while two at least of the nations of Central Europe are again in the market as borrowers. It seems that the European demands for capital will be abnormal for some time to come, and that in consequence interest rates will be high. Colonial Governments, on the other side, are continually resorting to London to raise money not only for fresh capital works, but for the redemption of maturing loans, and, as often happens,

for the payment of interest on existing loans. The Auditor-General of New South Wales drew attention in his 1925 report to the increasing proportion of his State's new loans which was absorbed in the payment of interest on old loans. New South Wales, incidentally, is hoping to borrow this year £11½ millions. At the same time the demands for capital in this country are becoming pressing. The Government's electricity scheme will result in more appeals for the investor's savings, while the Coal Commission advises that the problem in the coal industry will not be solved without a public subscription to buy out the royalty owner. The recent issue of £7,000,000 5 per cent. stock of the London County Council at 99½ is a sign that borrowers of the Trustee class are beginning to realize that rates of interest are not tending downwards.

* * *

The coming issue by the British subsidiary of the Snia Viscosa will provide another example of a high interest rate with good industrial security. It will probably be an issue of guaranteed preference shares and of a small amount of ordinary shares. The British Snia Viscosa will be formed to equip a factory in Great Britain for the manufacture of "Sniafil," a new textile fibre introduced by the Italian Company which has the soft appearance and textile strength of wool, and can be used alone or mixed with other fibres. Mr. Samuel Courtauld, at the recent shareholders' meeting of his Company, thought fit to sneer at this new fibre, Sniafil. The burden of his complaint was that it was not new, that it was not wool, that it was only "an artificial silk waste," and that he doubted whether it would ever develop into an important business, but that if it did, Courtaulds could produce it quickly at short notice. These are remarks to be expected from a competitor of Snia Viscosa, but the board of directors of British Snia will include at least three leading names in the British textile industry. We assume that these gentlemen have accurately weighed Mr. Courtauld's remarks.

* * *

Colonial and foreign Government securities lend themselves to a species of acrostics suitable for secretaries of Trust companies. Here, for example, is a typical problem—how to obtain a yield of 5½ per cent. on a full Trustee security? One solution is to take an amount of Queensland's 3½ per cent. stock and a double amount of New South Wales 6½ per cent. stock and combine the resulting yields. New South Wales 6½ per cent. stock is redeemable over the period 1930-40, but as the stock stands at 104, and as the New South Wales Government could now raise money, thanks only to the Trustee Acts, practically on a 5 per cent. basis, the stock is almost sure to be called for redemption in 1930. On that assumption it gives a high running yield (£6 5s. 6d.) with a loss of 13s. 6d. per cent. on redemption in 1930 at par. Queensland 3½ per cent. stock is redeemable actually in July, 1930. As it stands at 92½ it gives a low running yield (£3 15s. 6d.) and a profit of £1 14s. 6d. per cent. on redemption in 1930. The acrostic works out as follows:—

	Total Price.	Purchase Price.	Accrued Interest.	Income.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
£200 New South Wales 6½%	104	208 0 0	10 0	13 0 0
£100 Queensland 3½%	92½	92 15 0	15 0	3 10 0
	300 15 0		1 5 0	16 10 0
	100 5 0		8 0	5 10 0

In acrostics one does not allow for commissions.

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This year the directors of Thomas Tilling have been in sympathy with the annual rise in their Company's shares. They have announced a bonus. This they might have done twelve months ago, when we pointed out that the shares were cheap at 47s. 6d.

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